

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 1194.—VOL. XLIV.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 15, 1894.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



[“MADemoiselle, is this yours?” asked the maid, as her mistress came into the room.]

MADLINE GRANT.

CHAPTER XXII.

EVERY one was much relieved when the two missing people presented themselves just as they were thinking of sending out a party to search the hills with lanterns.

Mr. Grant had been in a state of all but boiling-over excitement for the last hour or so, and was truly thankful when he beheld his daughter coming up the wide staircase with slow, exhausted gait; pale, and grave, and tired, and drooping.

Lord Robert, who was full of voluble explanations of the “whole thing,” followed her at a distance. A glass of the beverage peculiar to this misty, mountainous country, i.e., whisky, had warmed his heart, had cheered his spirits, and loosened his tongue.

Madeline stood by with a face of white disgust, as he glibly and easily told lie after lie, and really made a very pretty, thrilling story out of their late “adventure,” painting with skilful dexterity the interior of the farm, the

funny, hospitable farmer, their frugal tea and late start, the bleakness of the fells, the torrents of rain, so that his listeners came to look upon him as a kind of hero, who had brought the young mistress of the house out of a very unpleasant predicament solely by his own forethought and energy.

She knew better, and as she bade every one good-night in turn her eyes met his for a second as for a moment she touched his hand, and said great things.

Mr. Grant was all on the *qui vive* to hear what Lord Robert had had during his long *tête-à-tête*, and how he had sped with his wooing. His jaw dropped with unconcealed disappointment when his guest brusquely informed him that it was “no go;” that he had done all in his power to prevail upon Miss Grant to change her mind and change her name, but it had been useless.

“She is like a rock, there is no moving her; and I have given it up as a bad job, sir. I assure you I’m very, very sorry, but thinking of your daughter is a mere waste of time. I might just as well cry for the moon.”

Mr. Grant was incredulous—was astounded.

He was unprepared to see Lord Robert, who had been so staunch but twenty-four hours previously, thus without a struggle fall back from the chase. He was keenly disappointed, and very angry with his stiff-necked offspring; but even he could see that Lord Robert was quite serious, and it did not become him to press his pretty daughter and her pretty fortune on any man—not even on the younger son of a duke. And there were, after all, as good fish in the sea as ever were caught, and Lord Robert had debts.

So he thus consoled himself as philosophically as he could, and sped his guest with as little regret as possible, when, to Madeline’s immense relief, he took his departure the following day, but not before they had had a short private interview and had exchanged a few words; and when his lordship left the castle he carried with him, not Madeline’s heart nor yet her good wishes, for his last words had been a veiled threat—but a large cheque on her father’s bankers, and a considerable share of the contents of her jewel case.

Very soon after this the party broke up. The weather was getting chilly, the mists

encroaching more and more upon the plains. The leaves were beginning to flutter down continually; the fruit and flowers were things of the past, and comfortable country houses in warmer England were sending forth tempting and pressing invitations.

The time was fixed for Mr. Grant's departure. The dogs and the keepers had had their last day's sport, and now, just at the eleventh hour, when she was actually on the point of leaving, Madeline discovered something about this mysterious house.

It was this. During a wet day, after the guests were gone, she had explored all the bedrooms and all the dressing-rooms of the two wings. They were generally much of the same pattern—old-fashioned, deep-windowed, comfortable apartments, with great cupboards nearly as big as dressing-rooms opening off them—splendid places for storing boxes, and for hanging dresses, but there was nothing remarkable in them in any way. They were all certainly very old, and many of them were very gloomy, but otherwise they were perfectly commonplace, respectable apartments.

It happened that the next day after her exhaustive examination was fine, very fine, like the last day of summer. As usual, however, their last day in the Highlands, and, prompted by the weather, Madeline went out for a ramble, and finally decided, on a sudden impulse, to make a sketch of the Castle from the pleasure-ground.

She set about this very rapidly, and soon made a capital drawing, and then fired with a desire to do the Castle from the other side—in short, from the far shore of the loch—where it loomed grey and majestic with the water lapping its old walls on two sides.

It would make a very pretty picture from this point, thought the fair artist, as she rapidly sketched in the outline; the near tower, the further one in perspective, the line of castellated roof, the little little side turrets and buttresses, this was all completed, and a few lines indicated where trees and water were to be, and then she set about the windows—but—and she paused. There were the red-room, and the white-room, and the brown-room windows, but what room was this, that nest the tower, with one window, only she could not remember it? It looked, too, a good-sized room.

In the small row there was another mysterious window, she could not remember that either. However, she sketched steadily away till her picture was sufficiently forward to be completed indoors, and then she went back to the castle, her mind full of one firm resolve—to discover to what rooms those two rather dim and dirty windows belonged; and it was not merely that they were dim and dirty—the shutters were closed.

True, they were not in a part of the castle that was much seen. They were rather round a corner behind the big tower. Yes, there she had a landmark, between the corner tower and the brown-room.

"Between the corner tower and the brown-room. I must try to remember that," she said to herself, as she ran lightly up the first steps.

The first person she encountered was Campbell, the "usual" country footman, who was carrying in the five o'clock tea-things to the morning-room as she crossed the hall.

"Campbell," she said, following him and laying down her drawing materials as she spoke, "I've just been sketching the house—the castle. I should say."

"Oh! deary me, miss, you don't say so," he uttered, startled out of all his manners.

"Why—why not?" she asked, quickly.

"What is there to be so surprised at?"

"Surprised, miss; no, miss!" picking up the sugar-tongs that he had dropped in his agitation. "But—but they do say as it's—it's a very uncanny to make a picture of Dunkearn."

What nonsense! The people here are simply slaves to superstition; everything is unlucky. You meet a black cat, that's un-

lucky; a red-haired person, that's unlucky; a funeral, that is too shocking; and a simple mangle, the worst of all," she stopped, breathless, and a little ashamed of her own volubility. "I want you to tell me something, Campbell," she proceeded, more gravely. "As you are a native of the place, and were born on the property, I cannot go to a better person. Do you see this window here?" Laying her little white finger on her sketch, "this window next to the brown chamber, between it and the tower. I can't remember any door in that corridor, but you can tell me, no doubt, and the one beneath it. What rooms are these—to what do they belong?"

Campbell looked at the sketch, not with respectful admiration, as became his mistress's very excellent handiwork, but with glassy eyes, livid countenance, and a face of unmistakable horror—as if he was actually gazing on some monster instead of a very pleasing little study in water-colours.

There were the two windows, sure enough—she had been especially painstaking with those two long slits—there were the windows, sure enough!

"Well, well," impatiently, "can you not tell me to which rooms they belong, Campbell?" she asked, in a sharper tone, irritated by his basilisk-like stare. "Do you hear me? Did you hear what I said? To what rooms," repeating her words very slowly, "do these windows belong?"

"I hear you, miss, I hear you," he responded, in a kind of husky whisper, "and I cannot tell you if I would. Though I've lived here man and boy, this thirty years, I cannot tell you—no one knows."

CHAPTER XXIII.

COURTESY had not been left out of Madeline's character. She had as much allowance of that little or big falling as most other women or men. She did not wait to remove her hat, much less pour out her tea; but on the last words of the last chapter had disappeared Campbell's lips she was out in the hall, with one foot already on the stairs. She paused for a moment, and looking back said—

"The west corridor, Campbell?"

Campbell, in answer to this query, merely nodded his head in a most lugubrious and significant manner, but uttered no word; and Madeline, without any more delay, dashed upstairs and into the very west corridor, directly into the brown bedroom. Could the dressing-room be on that other side? No. Then was into the lobby? No; positively there was no door. Not a room for a door, either as she could see between this bedroom and the tower.

She then went into the tower-room, an octagonal bed-chamber, with a brighter and pleasant look-out, commanding the lake on the one side and the approach to the castle on the other.

She could find no indication of another room. No, not although she felt along the oak cornice, and hammered with all her might upon the inside wall. It did not sound hollow, and it was three feet thick. Positively there was no room nor space for a door; and she, after a full half-hour's fruitless search—and, as she told herself, most foolish search—was compelled to descend and partake of her much over-drawn and now bitter tea.

As she signed and slipped she could not get her late discovery and her late futile search out of her head; her whole thoughts were taken up with those two mysterious windows. Actually, before she went to dress for dinner, she walked out alone in the chilly autumn evening to the far bank of the loch and looked at them again.

Yes, there they were, as plain to be seen as any other window in the Castle, and—a discovery again!—this time the shutters were open. What did this mean? It meant that there was a secret chamber in the house, and that some one lived there; either that, or it was something "uncanny," as Campbell had

hinted, and he had lived for thirty years about the place, and knew no more about the entrance to these rooms than she did.

It was strange—more than strange. She stared stupidly at this curious window till the first gong sounded, and then she went in and took another look into the west corridor—no door, no trace of a door.

She was bewildered. She hinted at her mystification to the garrulous Josephine, who exclaimed—

"Oh, mi ladi, why did you go to draw the castle? It is very unlucky, Campbell tells me—terrible!" throwing up her hands and eyes in the heat of her excitement. "And that room, those windows, you will never find; the entrance to them is only known to two people—the owner and the next heir. It passes down in the family for hundreds of years, so you or I could never, never, never know; and many people, Campbell says, live here all their lives and never remark the—the windows as you did."

"Then they must have been very stupid people," said Madeline, quickly, fastening on her remarks, "that's all I can say; but, Josephine, suppose the room, or rooms, are there, does any one know what is in them? I should like to find out."

"No—no! nobody knows—no one but the heir and the next-of-kin. They say a woman once did find out, and they cut off her hands, and cut out her tongue, so she could not make signs or write," whispered Josephine, in a low voice, and with horrified eyes to correspond.

"I think that Campbell has been talking to you, Josephine," said her mistress, with a laugh. "He is either amusing himself with playing on your fears, or else he is a fool—one or another. Have nothing to say to him, you silly woman. Next year, when we come back, I myself will run out this chamber of horrors—this skeleton in the cupboard; until then we must restrain our curiosity. I wish—oh! I wish very much that we were not going away to-morrow morning. I've always felt that there was something here that I could find out. There—there is the end, I must now leave you waiting."

No saying, she rushed to the door, and hurried out into the corridor, and ran down stairs again.

"What a trait!" ejaculated Josephine, as she looked away her mistress's things; "I believe she is afraid of nothing—man, devil, or beast, and what an air—a real princess. She does not in the least resemble her father, and Josephine laughed.

But what was this caught inside the skirt of her dress, by a slender bit of thin gold chain, as if she had pulled it off over her head along with the dress, and left it entangled there by mistake—a little gold wedding ring? Come—yes, it looked like that. This was extraordinary. Surely—surely—but no, her young lady was not married, her young lady never tolerated lovers. She was hard, and she was playful, and laughed every woeer to scorn, including that "vampire," Lord Robert. Ah! he was gone, and a good thing too. And now this was a day of discoveries.

Miss Grant was in a great way because she had seen two windows, and was all on the qui vive to find out what they meant. She herself, Josephine Rolfe, had also made a discovery, and a more important one, involving the little ring, and trying it on her own third finger. What did it mean? It was more important than two dirty old windows. She would judge by her young lady's face when she came to bed, which would be early, as they were to make an early start on the following morning, whether would it be best to lay it down, gold chain and all, in a conspicuous place, or to give it to her suddenly. The latter would be far the most telling, if mademoiselle had not missed her treasure, and the latter was accordingly her plan.

"Mademoiselle, is this yours?" she asked, abruptly, as her mistress came yawning into her room.

[illegible]

CHAPTER XXIV.

[illegible]

then for a couple of days abouting? toughen it
and want everybody that High-Glym has
looked upon with favorable sympathy and
few instances and daughters is a bewitching
and good looking young scholar. 10—now fine
The ballad has not been slow to pick up
words, and hints, and allusions: "Two Glyms."

dropped by their fathers and brothers across the family dinner-table, and no one left hospitable overtures made to the homicide that they would cultivate this "Glyn." "I was a little drunk when they came off that he was not a 'stable' man, and a good looking thing did not show in a man of color." He was a sturdy man, and a little more serious and a little more

And now and then he did some bit of his shell and nie or fished dinner tables, nor along against the wall at the tea parties; And the twin himself was not so big, instead, another not very frequent occasions, and was figure, finely put on the back, and once again to come another, furthered the album (and again)

"It was part of his duty," he told himself, to be on pleasant terms with his guests and sundries--to respond to their friendly invitations, to go to their houses, and make himself pleasant to their wives and daughters, and hand towels, and trim overcoats of fur and open shoes, and talk agreeable commonplaces; but when any of these young and lovely--charming as they all were--let down her eyes to speak, before him, and began to open the tiranobolus for a flirtation, he felt on the threshold. Long ago, before he met Madeline Grant, this sort of thing was all very odd, and that a little of it had gone a long way with him; but now it was all

Now, with Madeline in the background, among herself very delicately, he doubts and not thinking very much of him, he could not—no, he could not—like other less conventional gentlemen, laugh and exchange sallies, and cross words: and glances with any of these brightly, pretty, young women; knowing full well in his heart, that he was all the time that wolf in sheep's clothing—a married man! And then he was critical at heart, and hard to please.

As he looked round the various groups in ball-rooms—yes, he now and then went for an hour—he saw none of them to come up to

Madeline in any way—either in figure, face, grace, or gait—especially Madeline as she had just seen her in her very fine feathers.

"Doubtless many of these girls would have made a more manageable wife, if he thought of himself, bitterly.

Madeline had now completely taken him by the throat, and he was quite unable to resist her control. She went, and returned, and stayed away when she pleased, and for so long as it suited her. She had evidently resolved to play the part of a *l'attachée* first, a *gouvernante* and a mother very much the best of all, and her neglect of him he could tolerate in a way, but her neglect of her child made him extremely angry. She had coldly confined it to Mrs. Holt, and lightly shaken off all maternal duties when his mother, unable to do so, could not look the part as she shattered fashionable nonsense to these idle young men on King's cross-platform, and never had she thought to the child she was turning her back upon a certain country farm-house.

She had been away nearly four months, and the mail written—oh, yes, pretty frequently; but the tone of her letters was a little forced and strained; their gaiety was not natural. Conscience makes cowards of us all; and her refusals were swift, and short, and few, and far between.

The Grants had returned. Mr. Grant had a good deal of affairs of business to make up, and was away almost daily, and all day long in the City; and now, was Madeline's opportunity.

She lost no time in paying a visit to the Temple to the Inner Temple—arriving on foot, plainly dressed, and wearing a very thick veil.

She was a good deal bewildered by the old
beards and passages, but at last found out Mr.
Glyn's chambers.
She was received by an elderly, bare-headed,
drizzle-looking woman, with a squabbable
beard, who told her "to go up to the second
fight from yours."

She could tell nothing of the gentleman; he was found out all day long," like a dog in a fair."

Further up the ~~base~~, "narrow stairs the
cathedral to the ~~two~~ with two gentlemen, who
passed ~~the~~ felt it) and looked back at the
moored and ranged the outside door of Mr.
H. Gly.

Truly such an elegant looking young lady was not to be met about the old Temple every day, and never had such an apparition been beheld on Mr. Givvins's piazza.

The outer room was occupied by two clerks, who stared at the visitor in unqualified amazement—this something spiky in the shape of a client, very different to the usual run. A broad-fronted premise case was being introduced

and material ideas. Something more to the purpose than cracked old togs fighting a bout right of way, or an involved legacy case.

Here was a pretty girl, and a small. This much they noted, with their sharp, con- judicial eyes, as she stood in the doorway rather timidly, and raised her veil.

"One of them at once bounded off his seat, and asked, with obsequious deference, what he could do for her."

lay double desk, piled with documents, its rows of law books ranged round the room on staggering, rickety shelves, its threadbare carpet, its rusty fireirons, and its grimy windows.

Still, could these two youths be Hugh's clerks, and could all these immense masses of papers concern Hugh? If so, Hugh was really getting on—really getting on at last; but what a horrible fusty place! The very air smelt of law-books.

"Mr. Glyn, miss? Very sorry, but Mr. Glyn is in court," said the clerk, briskly.

adjoining, and standing in front of another door, evidently Hugh's own sanctum.

"Swear, I could not say, miss. He is to speak in the case of Fuller versus Pottsbreach of contract. Any message——"

But the words died upon his lips. This un-

"It's a fright," she was wroth, divining this
horror; "Mr. Glyn knows me."

He then went and sat herself down in Mr. Glavin's office in a chair, in front of a table piled with briefs, all more or less neatly tied up and collected.

There were heaps of letters under letter-weights.

There was a law-book, a couple of open notes, and all the usual apparatus of a very busy legal man.

She shrugged her shoulders and looked round the room.

It was dingy and shabby (furniture taken out of veneration, once upon a time, from the last tenant), the carpet between the door and the fireplace was worn quite threadbare and it was a pathway, and so it was.

Another pathway ran from the window to the wall, where probably the inmate had crawled to make up his speeches.

There was her special abomination, horrid furniture, a queer spindle-legged sideboard, some small old prints on the wall; certainly there was nothing in the room to divert Hugh's attention, and outside there was no prospect beyond a set of chambers & a bit, similar to Hugh's own; a very ugly block of buildings, and one forlorn-looking tree, nodding its branches restlessly to wind & fro.

She got up and looked into the next room. The clerks were not now noticing her. Mr. Glyn suffered no idleness. This was his bedroom—a still bare apartment. No carpet—oh

yeigade!—no curtains, a small iron bedstead, a
sitting-bath, a battalion of boots—Hugh was
always particular about his boots, he remem-
bered. There was a sixpenny glass on the
wall, a painted chest of drawers, and one
chair—Spartan simplicity, indeed!

What a horrible contrast to her luxurious home!

She closed the door with a little shudder, and as she did so a quantity of large, imposing-looking envelopes and cards stuck all about the chimney-piece—the mirror, such as it was, and the pipe rack—caught her quick eye, and she immediately proceeded to examine them.

"Blest if she ain't a overhauling his invitations!" exclaimed a clerk, who, by tilting his chair back till it was at a most dangerous angle, caught a glimpse of what he and his coadjutor began to think was "Mr. Glyn's young woman."

"Her cheek beats anything. Should I go and interfere?" said the first speaker, in an awe-struck whisper.

"No, you just leave her alone," said No. 2, who had the bump of caution well developed. "Isn't our business; but I did think as he was the last man in the world to have a lady coming and routing about among his things. There ain't nothing that she will find will make her any wiser," contemptuously.

But he was mistaken. She found a great deal that surprised her very much—very much indeed.

Here were cards from old judges and stupid old law fogies requesting the pleasure of Mr. Glyn's company at dinner. That was all easily understood.

But here were invitations to one or two great houses to which they went themselves, and also here was what was the stratagem thing of all—here were blazoned cards of invitation to houses to which her father had not yet obtained the *entree*, while he never so assiduously on the noble entertainers.

She stood for a moment with one of these cards in her hands, and turned it over reflectively, and—such is poor frail human nature—this bit of pasteboard did more to raise her

husband in her estimation than all the briefs she saw piled in his desk.

She began to look at him in a new light. Hitherto she had been very fond of Hugh in her own way.

He had been very good to her when she had no friends—he had borne all their poverty with patience—yes, certainly he had.

But she thought, rather resentfully at times, that a man without some preparation for such a "rainy day" as they had had ought not to have married. Better have left her as he found her.

Still she liked Hugh far better than anyone all the same; but poverty, pinching, his long illness, and his helplessness, had made her put herself rather above him in her own thoughts.

She for a time had been the bread-winner, and well she had struggled at that awful pinch, as we know; but, alas! that we should say it, prosperity had spoiled her. The longer she lived in her father's luxurious home the less inclined she felt to return to her own modest roof-tree.

"And especially," looking round with a wry face, "to such a place as this."

She was now necessary to her father. He was a bit of an invalid, whilst Hugh was young and strong, and every day she was hoping to see her way to making her great disclosure; but every day the chances of her making that disclosure became less and less and less.

Hugh was evidently well thought of in influential quarters, "and, of course, Hugh is of good family—anyone can see that to look at him," she said to herself, reflectively.

This discovery had raised him considerably in Madeline's opinion.

Latterly she had been looking down a little upon Hugh, as we have said, and telling herself that he had won a great prize in the matrimonial market—that he barely seemed seemed to realise the importance of his wife. She bracketed Hugh, mentally, with poverty and shabbiness, and had a vague idea that he would never rise beyond either.

She felt a kind of protecting affection for him, and she looked down upon him just a little.

It is very possible to be very fond of a person and to do that all the same, and now Hugh's busy clerks and these coroneted letters had given her ideas rather an unexpected shock.

She went over and stood in the window and drummed her hands idly upon the small, old-fashioned panes, where not a few names and initials were cut.

As she stood thus (a very pretty figure to be seen in anyone's window, much less that of an avowed Sybarite like Mr. Hugh Glyn), a young man sauntered to the opposite one with his hands in his pockets and his mouth widely yawning as if he were going to swallow up the whole premises.

He paused in mute astonishment, and gazed incredulously across the narrow lane that divided the two buildings; then Madeline heard him shout, in a stentorian voice,—

"I say, Bob, come here—quick! Come and look at the girl in Glyn's window! My wig! ain't this a joke!"

And hearing this the girl backed hastily out of sight, and had the amusement of seeing no less than three heads peering across, vainly endeavouring to catch a glimpse of the promised young lady.

However, they saw her go out, although she was not aware of the fact.

They were very much pleased with her figure, her walk, and her feet, and took care to tell Mr. Glyn of their kind and flattering opinion, and to poke him in the ribs with a walking-stick—not as pleasant or facetious an action as it sounds—and tell him that "they would not have believed it, and that 'still waters run deep,' and that he was a sly dog, and had good taste," &c., &c., all of which witticisms Mr. Glyn took in anything but good part, especially as he could not tell them that the

lady about whom they were all so enthusiastic was his wife.

Indeed, if he had they would only have roared with laughter, and assured him, with tears in their eyes, that they did not believe him, and that he might pass it on to the Marines.

Madeline had waited fully three-quarters of an hour, and as there was no sign of Mr. Glyn's return, she made up her mind to depart.

As she walked through the outer office once more, thickly veiled, the alert clerk sprang up again to open the door, and as he held it back with his inky hand, he said, with a grin,—

"When Mr. Glyn comes back who shall I say called, miss?"

Madeline hesitated for fully a minute, and then she turned to the youth in her most stately manner, and said,—

"Say Miss Grant," and having thus left her name with all due dignity, she passed through the door with a slight inclination of the head and walked downstairs.

She met a good many cheery-looking bar-risters in wigs and flyaway gowns as she passed out through the precincts of the inns, and wondered much if she should meet Hugh, or if she would recognise him in that funny dress?

For, of course, he wore a wig and gown also. He had always kept them in his chambers, and she had never seen him wear them.

But she did not meet Hugh, so she took a hansom and did a little shopping in Regent-street, and then got home just in nice time for afternoon tea.

As she sat sipping it in her luxurious boudoir, wrapped in a satin tea-gown and with her feet on the fender, Mr. Glyn returned home cold and tired and hoarse. His fire was out.

"Confound that old woman downstairs!" he muttered; and there was no sign of his modest evening meal.

"Please, sir," said one of the clerks, who had been busy looking up, &c., now following him into his own room, "there was somebody here to see you while you were out."

"Well, well; what did he want?" impatiently.

"It was a lady!" impressively.

"A lady!" he echoed, slowly. "A lady!"

"Yes, sir," very briskly. "A young lady!" She left her name. She waited here for more than half-an-hour.

"Did she?"

"Yes, and she bid me be sure to tell you," embroidering a little to give point to his story, "that Miss Grant had called."

"Miss Grant! Are you sure she said that?" quickly.

"Yes, sir, quite sure; positively certain."

"All right. Yes—then it's all right! You can go," dismissing him with a wave of his hand, and suddenly pitching off his wig in one direction and gown in another, he sat down to digest this piece of news.

"So Madeline had come back, had come to beard him in his den. What did it all mean? Did she intend to come back?"

For fully an hour he sat in the dusk, nay, the darkness, pondering this question, forgetful of fire, of lights, or of dinner.

He would like to have cross-examined his clerk as to where she sat and what she said; but no, he could not stoop to that. And then his mind reverted again to that crucial, and as yet unanswered question,—

"Did she mean to come back?"

CHAPTER XXV.

MADLINE's next excursion was down to see her infant—not exactly an infant now, five months had made a great difference in Master Harry Glyn. He could toddle about with the help of one finger; he was a very pretty little fellow, with his father's dark eyes, and the very loadstar of Mrs. Holt's existence.

Madeline felt a secret thrill of pride as she

saw him, and eagerly stretched out her arms to take him; but she felt a pang of quite another description as he turned away his face impatiently, and buried it in Mrs. Holt's ample bosom. And yet she was his mother, and it was she who had borne with his peevish, fretful childish whims, and it was she who had sacrificed many a night's rest to this pretty little fellow, who now turned his face from her—her, his own mother.

Mrs. Holt understood it in a moment—those sudden tears which had started to Madeline's eyes; and unnatural hard-hearted girl as Mrs. Holt firmly believed her to be—despite of Harry's lovely frocks, which were the amazement of the neighbourhood, and highly as Mrs. Holt disapproved of her behaviour—yet she could not, as she afterwards expressed it, for the life of her help being sorry for her at the moment. She looked so pale, and her lips trembled so, poor thing, and—and—she was so main pretty.

Master Glyn came round in time, and in time permitted his mother to take him on her knee, and to show him her pretty watch, and hold it to his ear.

These stolen hours were very, very sweet; and Madeline told herself that she could not, would not, bear to be longer separated from her child. He would grow up loving Mrs. Holt instead of her. The thought was gall. (But, my dear, good young lady, there is a saying that just fits your case: "You cannot have your loaf and eat it." You cannot live in your father's house in the character of his adored unmarried daughter, a kind of queen in your way, and a social divinity, and at the same time play a mother's part to your little son in the Berkshire farm-house, much less take your place beside that hard-working, lonely, self-denying young man, now poring over a mass of papers by a dim lamp in the Temple. You cannot be in two places at once, and cull the delights of both situations. You must choose your lot. Poverty—the outcast daughter and the company of your husband and son—or riches—Belgrave-square and the character of Miss Grant, her father's right-hand, her father's idol, the prettiest, wealthiest girl in London. And you must make your final choice soon.)

Mr. Grant was now away from early morn till dewy eve, day after day, and though the time was nipping December and bleak January Madeline paid a good many visits to Holt Hill Farm. The cords that drew her there were very strong, and each time she left that little room off the farm kitchen she made a firm resolution that ere she returned she would tell. Ah! but ere she reached Waterloo Station her courage had generally cozed away at her finger tips.

Moral courage was not her strong point. She could not make the final plunge; she could not tell her father, especially as he was fractious and complaining, talked vaguely of fashionable doctors, of long-standing heart disease.

Now was not the time. A violent paroxysm of rage might kill him. Oh! fatal determination! She would wait.

One evening he announced that he was going away the next day, and would not return till twelve or one o'clock the following night, and that he had met Lady Rachel, who had promised to come and lunch with her the next day and keep her company; and, according to promise, Lady Rachel duly arrived, full of gossip, full of vitality, and decked out in the latest suggestion of the fashion. She had a great deal to tell about a grand dinner at a great house the previous evening, and retailed the menu, the dresses of the ladies, and the names of the guests—twenty-six to dinner. "And, my dear, there was a barrister there. Barristers are looking up!"

"Yes, another chicken outlet, please," holding out her plate—the Jeames's were banished—"and such a good-looking young man—a Mr. Glyn. He sat beside her—My dear, my dear! you are giving me lobster sauce!"

she screamed. "What are you thinking about—and, oh! what was I saying? Yes, about Mr. Glyn. He was so amusing, and said such witty things. I wish I could remember half of them, nay, any of them, and pass them off as my own. It was more the way he said them though, and, my love," laying down her knife and fork, suddenly, as if overwhelmed by the recollection, "he had the most irresistible dark eyes you ever saw in all your life!"

"Yes, you seem quite—quite impressed," returned Madeline, breaking up her bread and not looking at her costative friend.

She—no—she did not like it. How dare any woman talk to her of her husband's irresistible dark eyes? And Hugh! Could he have been flirting? could he flirt?

"He is coming to dine with us next Friday—said he would be delighted. You shall come too, and see my latest lion. They say he is awfully clever—writes for the *Saturday Review*, and is going into Parliament."

"If you are going to make a lion of everyone who is going into Parliament, my dear," returned Maddie, dusting crumbs off her lap, "you will find your work out for you. Suppose we adjourn to the little drawing-room?"

"He talked of you, 'ma belle,'" affectionately leaning on Madeline's arm. "I told him that you were the greatest heiress out, the prettiest girl in London, and that he ought to know you!"

"And—and what did he say?" arranging as she spoke an ornament on the chimney-piece with averted face, and a considerable accession of colour.

"Oh, I'm not quite sure what he said beyond—oh, yes! mentioning some nonsense about his being a busy barrister, and not a ladies' man."

And again the vivacious matron led the conversation away to another topic, and after a time declaring that she had an engagement at five o'clock and could not stay, even if Maddie went down on her knees—a feat that Madeline had no desire to perform.

She rushed away, as she had entered, in a kind of moral whirlwind of good-byes, last words, pressing messages, and kisses.

And Madeline sat alone over the fire, and thought of what she had heard with some bitterness.

Hugh had not written to her lately—Hugh had not taken any notice of her call. Of course he could not come to the house, but he might have written.

Yes, he had no reason to treat her like this, when she was doing her best with all her might for him and Harry. Surely he must know that, and that she would rather be with them.

But as she glanced at her magnificent surroundings, at the silver equipage just brought in by two powdered footmen, and a request to know if there was "any orders for the carriage," her heart misgave her.

Would not Hugh think that she preferred all this, that this wealth was her attraction, luxury her idol—the idol that had cast out him and poor little Harry.

She made a sudden decision. She would go and see Hugh; yes, that very evening, and partake—yes—of his frugal dinner, and talk him into a better frame of mind, and a better humour with himself. She would drop in on him in all her evening finery, and give him a surprise.

The idea was caught at by her romantic imagination. She swallowed down her tea, and ran quickly up to her room, and called Josephine.

"Josephine," she said, as that very smart Abigail appeared, "I am going out to an early dinner with a friend, one of those I knew at school, and I want you to make me very smart. It's for a piece of fun, for there won't be any company. What shall I wear?" pulling off her velvet morning dress. "Come, be quick, and make up your mind."

"Well, if you want to be very grand and

to look very beautiful, and if it is for a little joke, I think," going quickly to a wardrobe, producing a heavy garment, and laying it upon the bed, "your cream satin, with the Alençon lace and embossed velvet train. In that, and your diamond stars in your hair, and with rivière of diamonds round your neck, you will look like a princess."

"Capital, capital, you clever Josephine! The very thing, nothing could be better; and now be quick and set to work and dress me, for I think the dinner is at seven."

The toilet took a considerable time. What with dressing Madeline's hair, and lacing her dress, and arranging her jewels, it was long after six before this great business was completed.

It was at last, to Josephine's entire satisfaction.

Even Madeline could not refrain from a smile as she glanced at her reflection in the long mirror, but a sharp sting took away from her present comfortable complacency, a bitter taste was in the cup.

Was it for this, asked remorse, this costly dress, this lace, these diamonds, and such as these she had sacrificed her home and husband?

"No," she retorted angrily, aloud, much to Josephine's surprise, "no, it was not."

Yet even so she was but half-convinced.

Maddie had her long dress carefully gathered round her, enveloped nearly from head to foot in a heavy sealskin mantle, with loose, hanging sleeves, that came down almost to the ground, tied a lace handkerchief over her head, caught up a pair of gloves, and was ready; and, in spite of Josephine's almost frantic appeal to take a footman and to go in the brougham, set forth in a hansom—alone!

There was a flavour of wild adventure about the whole proceeding that made her heart beat unusually fast.

The idea of taking Hugh by storm in his musty chambers, of talking him into a more amenable frame of mind, of dining with him tête-à-tête, of trying the effect of her much-augmented charms upon her own husband (for she had now fully learnt to know the value of youth, and beauty, and dress), all carried her away out of her usually sober, steady, prudent, everyday frame of mind.

She felt a little nervous as she stepped out of her hansom close to the vicinity of the dark, gloomy, ill-lit old Temple, and proceeded to Hugh's chambers as before, on foot.

Fortunately there was a hard frost, and her dainty shoes were not much the worse.

She came to the door and rang, a pretty loud peal this time, smiling to herself as she thought of Hugh sitting probably over his solitary meal, perhaps by the light of one equally solitary candle.

The door was opened by a curious jerk and by some invisible agency, and she beheld before her, half-way up the stairs, the bearded woman, carrying a heavy tray, who, unable to turn her head, shouted out, querulously,—

"If that's the washing, come in. I hope to gracious you've done his shirts a bit better nor 'em last week. They was a sight, and his collars! Dear me, dear me!"

And thus, ejaculating she rounded the corner of the staircase, and was lost to sight; but still she shouted, though her voice did not come like a falling star,—

"You can go in by the other door and lay them in his bedroom, and leave the basket."

Madeline was half suffocated with suppressed laughter as she tripped quickly up after this authoritative old person, and as she went she took off her head gear, then she quickly unpinned her train, and as she came to the top landing she divested herself of her mantle.

The old woman was already in the outer office, which was lit, and had deposited her load upon an empty table, when, hearing a footfall behind her, she turned and beheld Madeline. In other words, a very beautiful, tall young lady, with a low, square-cut bodice,

a long cream-coloured satin dress and train, half caught over her arm, with diamonds seemingly blazing from her hair, her ears, her neck, her arms.

No one could give any idea of her amazement nor of the expression of her countenance as she staggered back against the nearest wall with open mouth, and protruding eyes, and powerless, limp arms, and uttered, in loud accents, the one word,—

"Laws!"

(To be continued.)

THE STAGE FOOL.—To very many, even well-informed people, who go to the theatre, the constant presence of a fool or jester in Shakespearean drama, and the frequent allusion to such an individual when absent, must be somewhat of a puzzle. The real fact is, that in England, as well as on the Continent, fools were considered necessary adjuncts at court and in the retinues of families of consequence. They were authorised wits, who could crack jokes without fear of the consequences, upon every one with whom they came in contact, from the sovereign to the subject, and in the former case upon weaknesses and foibles at which no courtier or counsellor dare even hint. That quaint old churchman, Dr. Fuller, speaking of the court jester, says: "That it is an office which none but he that hath wit can perform, and none but he that wants wit will undertake." Under these circumstances how the fools were secured is something we cannot understand. These attendants upon the court continued until quite a late period. Muckle John, the fool of Charles I., and the successor of Archie Armstrong, is, perhaps, the last regular personage of this class to be found in English history, though wits like Captain Morris, and even Sheridan, were regular hangers-on of royalty in the days of George IV., almost within our own memory.

WOODEN AND CLAY PIPES.

The short clay pipe, formerly used by smokers, has, of late years, been to a great extent supplanted by the wooden pipe, the manufacture of which is now an important industry.

Some interesting information respecting these pipes is given in Consul Inglis's trade report on Leghorn, whence the material for making wooden pipes is now so largely exported. Similar works are also to be found at Siena and Grosseto. Selected roots of the heath—preference being given to the male variety—are collected on the hills of the Maremma, where the plant grows luxuriantly and attains a great size.

When brought to the factory the roots are cleared of earth, and any decayed parts are cut away. They are then shaped into blocks of various dimensions, with a circular saw set in motion by a small steam-engine. Great dexterity is necessary at this stage in cutting the wood to the best advantage, and it is only after a long apprenticeship that a workman is thoroughly efficient. The blocks are then placed in a vat, and subjected to a gentle simmering for a space of twelve hours. During this process they acquire the rich, yellowish-brown hue for which the best pipes are noted, and are then in a condition to receive the final turning; but this is done elsewhere.

The rough blocks are packed in sacks containing forty to one hundred dozen each, and sent abroad, principally to France (St. Cloud), where they are finished into the famous "G. B. D.," known to smokers in England under the name of "brierwood" pipes.

The production of this article is considerable, four hands turning out about sixty sacks per month. Consignments are also made to England and Germany, but the Anti-Tobacco Association will be glad to hear that at present the demand is said to be rather slack.

THE FAIR ELAINE.

CHAPTER XLV.

"No, not to know it," Arley answered; "but I've heard of such things, and that great perfection has been attained in copying the different members of the body."

"I suppose it will cost a great deal," Eddie went on, musingly. "I asked Uncle Philip if it would not, and he said I was not to think anything about that, but get well and ready for it as soon as possible."

"You are very fortunate in having so kind an uncle," Arley said.

"Oh, but—" Eddie began, as if to explain something, but his companion had taken out her watch, and seeing how late it was, said she must not stay any longer.

"Do you come here often?" she asked, as she drew on her glove.

"Yes, every day, and I stay almost all day, too," the boy replied. "When Uncle Philip found that I wanted to come he gave me a season ticket, and," with a smile, "I mean to make the most of it."

"That is right," Arley said, smiling back into his eager face, and thinking what an interesting lad he was; "it will do you good to study the pictures here. Now good-bye, and perhaps I shall see you again, for I may come some other day myself."

"I hope you will," Eddie returned, wistfully, and he stood looking after her until she disappeared from sight.

"How proud that child is of his 'Uncle Philip,'" Arley thought, as she made her way out of the building, "for every other sentence was full of him and his virtues. Way could not Philip Perton have been such a man," her despairing heart cried out, "when almost every other whom it has been my privilege to know has been so noble and true? Sir Charles, Sir Anthony, Will, and now this boy's uncle, who bears the same name, is held up before me as a model of perfection."

A bitter sigh escaped her, and she felt as if her lot was very hard.

The next day she went to see Jane Collins—Miss McAllister having learned where she lived from Lady Elaine—and the woman appeared as glad to see her as if she had been a long-absent child of her own.

"Ah! miss, the sight of ye is good for sore eyes," she said, her face shining with pleasure; "and," she added, "ye look more like the pretty laddy than ever."

She did not tell her, however, that it was on account of the sorrowful gravity of her face and the pained look in her eyes.

"I am glad to see you again, Mrs. Collins," Arley answered, "and this is the first visit that I have made anywhere."

"You are very kind, miss, I'm sure," the woman said, gratefully. "I declare! I never thought I should see ye again when I left ye sick there in that heathenish city."

"I believe that I never should have lived to come home if it had not been for your kindness and care," Arley returned feelingly. "You took care through the most dangerous part of my illness, but I felt dreadfully lonely and miserable when you went away, and there was no one to speak a word to me in my mother-tongue."

"Poor child! poor child! I never would have left ye if it hadn't been for my old man; we've never been parted, ye know, and one's own husband is—"

Jane stopped suddenly, and greatly embarrassed, as she remembered what Arley's husband had been to her; but the young wife came to her relief.

"Yes, I know," she said, colouring slightly, "it would not have been right for you to stay, and as it happened I did very well; the little doctor was very kind, and my landlady did all that she could. After I recovered I met an English lady and her son, and have been travelling with them ever since, and only returned last Monday."

"Have ye met her laddyship—the friend who is so fond of you?" Jane Collins asked, with a curious look.

"No, she has gone into the country for a few days."

"I expect she has good news for ye, miss." The good creature longed to say something to make that beautiful face lose a little of its sadness.

Yes, I know she has," Arley answered, and her eyes did brighten now. "She wrote me to come home, for she had learned who I was, and I am very eager to see her. I shall come and tell you what my name is just as soon as I learn it myself, for it was you who gave me the clue."

Who would have believed, miss, that just our chance meeting there in Madrid would have brought about so much?" Jane said, wondering; then she proceeded to tell Arley about her own accident and illness, and what Lady Elaine had done for her, and concluded with the apology:

"She only needs a pair of wings, miss, to make her ready for Heaven."

"She is very lovely, I know, but I hope her wings won't develop at present," Arley returned, smiling, "for I should be very loath to part with her; I don't wish her to become an angel for a long time yet."

"No more do I, miss, I can tell ye; but there ain't many her equal walkin' this earth; but she looks so white and sad sometimes when she comes to see me that my old heart leaps into my throat and near about chokes me."

"Yes," Arley replied, "the gentleman whom she expected to marry was suddenly killed last summer, and she has been nearly heart-broken over it."

"Poor dear! everybody has trouble here," Jane returned, with a sigh.

After chatting awhile longer Arley rose to go, and as she said good-bye she laid an envelope on the woman's lap.

"I have not forgotten your generous loan, Mrs. Collins, with all the rest of your kindness, and you will find the sum with interest in this, and, believe me, I shall never cease to be grateful to you," she said, with tears in her eyes.

"Lor', miss, I couldn't take no interest," Jane began, growing painfully crimson, and looking suspiciously at the envelope.

"Well, call it a little gift of remembrance, then," Arley said, smiling, "and if you do not wish to use it for yourself, get your husband something nice with it. Good-bye again; I shall come often to see you now, and without waiting for any reply she went away."

Mrs. Collins examined the contents of the envelope after she had gone, and found fifty pounds—just double the amount that she had lent Arley in her necessity.

The tears streamed down her cheeks as she recognised this token of her gratitude.

"The Lord's a good paymaster," she murmured, reverentially, as she thought of all the kindness that she had received of late; but she knew that I didn't begrudge this money to the poor, desolate thing lying there so sick, and miserable, and friendless."

"Yes, I will get John something nice with it," she added, her face brightening. "He shall have the easiest chair in London to rest his poor, stiff body in." John had had the rheumatism very badly of late. "Poor old man! he always climbs into this lovely one, that her laddyship gave me, when I'm a-bed, though he won't go high if when I'm up. Yes, he shall have the very best chair that money can buy."

CHAPTER XLVI.

A DAY or two after her visit to Jane Collins, Arley was impelled to go to the Academy.

She had thought much about the pale, intellectual boy whom she had met there during her previous visit, and she felt herself growing unconsciously interested in the portrait.

Perhaps it was because of his condition, and the fact that he was an orphan, which appealed to her sympathies; or it might be on account of his evident love for art; at all events, she hoped she should meet him again, and she found herself looking eagerly about for him in every room that she entered.

She spent two or three hours in the galleries, but without catching sight of her new little friend, and she had at length come to the conclusion that he was not there at all, and with a feeling of disappointment was about to take her own departure, when she suddenly caught him in a small room, sitting upon a box behind a huge easel, as if he desired to escape observation, and working away in his sketch-book most diligently.

"Ah! I have found you at last," Arley said, in a low, eager tone, as she bent over his shoulder to see what he was engaged upon.

"I have been looking for you this long time!"

"Have you?" Eddie asked, lifting a bright, flushed face to her, while he might have told her that he had actually named every face there for several days, in the hope of seeing her again.

"Yes, I have; and, do you know, I went away the other day without asking your name, and so I've been obliged to think of you as 'that boy,' ever since," Arley said, with a musical laugh.

Eddie laughed too, pleased to know that she had thought of him at all, and then said, simply,—

"My name is Eddie Winthrop." "Thank you, Eddie," she returned; "and what are you doing to-day?" he asked, bending nearer to examine his work.

"I am trying to do that face over there," he answered, pointing to a copy of Raphael's Madonna.

"Ah! I think you would do better on landscapes or fancy sketches than upon portraits," Arley said, for he was making good work over the beautiful features.

"I know it is dreadful," he replied, hastily tearing the leaf from his book and crumpling it in his hand, while he flushed hotly to the roots of his hair.

"Now I have wounded you, Eddie. I did not mean to do that," Arley said, regretfully; "but you were doing such nice work the other day that I think it was pity to waste your time over what none but the most skillful artists can do well. I am sorry if I have hurt you."

"No, you have not," he answered, earnestly, "and I ought to be thankful to you for telling me; but it," with a wistful glance at the heavenly countenance, "is such a lovely face I wanted to take something away to help me remember it."

"You shall have something, dear," Arley said, surprised to see how refined his taste was. "I have a small copy of the Madonna, which I bought in Rome, and I will give it to you. It is only a porcelain picture; but it is a very perfect copy, and I think you will like it."

"Oh, thank you!" Eddie returned, gratefully, then added, musingly,—

"But, I'm sure, I don't know why you should be so kind to me."

"Because you have touched a soft spot in my heart, I suppose," Arley returned, smiling at his earnest face; then continued: "I always feel very tenderly towards anyone who has no father or mother, for I, too, have been an orphan ever since I was a little bit of a girl, though I have a dear auntie who has been almost the same as a mother to me."

"If she has been as good to you as my Uncle Philip is to me, I know you must love her very much," Eddie said, earnestly; and, "he added, 'he isn't really my uncle either.'"

"Not your uncle!" Arley cried, with a sudden thrill.

"No, but you are almost a stranger to me, and, perhaps, you wouldn't care to know about it," Eddie said, beginning to feel as if he was thrusting his history upon her.

"Oh, yes, I do care; please tell me! I always love to know about people who are kind and good," Arley repeated, feeling

CHAPTER XLVII.

ATONEMENT.

Wednesday morning, long before it was time for fashionable callers to make their appearance, Miss McAllister's door-bell rang. There was a low, sweet-voiced inquiry of the maid who answered it; then the swift rush of footsteps up the stairs, a rustle of soft garments along the corridor, and a black-robed figure stopped before the door of Arley's boudoir.

Then there was a soft tap, and in answer to a low "come in," Lady Elaine turned the handle, and, almost before Arley had time to realize her presence, she had glided to her side, and a pair of arms was encircling her neck, a pair of tremulous, dewy lips met hers, and those sweet, well-remembered blue eyes were looking an unutterable love into hers.

"My darling! oh, my darling! how impatiently I have waited and longed for this moment!" Lady Elaine said, in a fond, eager tone. "What shall I say to you? how shall I tell you the blessed news in store for you? I asked Nannie, at the door if you were in, and alone. I wanted to come to you and tell you when no one else was by; and when she told me you were up here, I came without waiting to be announced—I knew you would not mind, and I could not wait a moment longer."

Arley regarded her friend in surprise while she returned her tender greeting; she had never seen the fair, calm Lady Elaine so excited and disconcerted before.

The arms which encircled her trembled, the lips that kissed her quivered, and her voice shook with emotion.

Was it because this meeting brought back sad memories of poor, lost Wil, and opened her wounds afresh?

She could not think so, for there seemed to be no sadness or thought of self in her greeting—only joy, and love, and eagerness.

A feeling of restful content suddenly settled upon Arley as she nestled closer into her clinging arms, and clasped her own about Lady Elaine's slight waist.

"I, too, have been very impatient to see you," she said. "I can never tell you how I have longed for you during the two years that we have been separated. I have often thought if I could only have poured my sorrows and trials into your sympathizing ear, and had you to guide and counsel me with your calm, wise judgment, I should have suffered much less; but that was a selfish feeling, wasn't it, dear? when you have had your own sorrows, and such heavy ones, too, to bear."

"We will not talk of 'sorrow' now, Arley," Lady Elaine replied, but growing white with sudden pain, "we both have had peculiar trials to bear, I know, but we have so much to be thankful for that we must put our grief out of sight—and perhaps, but for these very sorrows, the present joys would never have been granted to us. Oh! Arley—you know what I am here for—you know that I have solved all the mystery of your birth, and the result is wonderful! you could never—never imagine the truth! and you will be rich, my dear, far richer than you have ever been before, you have a fortune of nearly five hundred thousand pounds coming to you."

"Elaine! you cannot mean it!" Arley cried, in astonishment, "but," she added, flushing, and tears starting to her eyes, "I do not care for riches if I can only have some one to own and love me."

"Ah! my dear—my dear! I have not told you the best of my tidings," responded her companion, tremulously, "let me clasp you closely; let me look full into your dear eyes while I tell it; my own Arley, you must never call me Lady Elaine again, for you are a ladyship your own sweet self. My dearest, I will not keep you in suspense a moment longer—you are Lady Alice, eldest daughter of his Grace the Duke of Mordaunt, and therefore my own—my very own sister!"

Arley was literally stricken dumb by this wonderful intelligence. She could only rest in those clinging arms and stare helplessly up into Lady Elaine's face, her own as white as snow, while all her strength forsook her, leaving her weak and almost fainting.

From the hour when she had first met the young Countess in the home of their mutual friend, Annie Hamilton, she had experienced an affection, as deep and strong as it was strange, for her. It had been reciprocated by Lady Elaine, and both had often wondered why they should feel such peculiar tenderness for each other.

Now they understood it; the same blood flowed in their veins; they owed their being to the same father and mother, and nature and instinct had both asserted themselves long before it was possible for them to comprehend the reason for it.

"It is no wonder that we have loved each other if this is true," Arley breathed at last, while she twined her arms more closely about the form beside her. "My sister! Can it be possible?"

"Not only possible, but an absolute, indisputable fact," Lady Elaine returned, kissing her again and again.

The tears rained over Arley's face, and sobs shook her.

"I have so longed for some one who was my very own to love, and who would love me—I have been so lonely all my life, yearning for some congenial companion; and now, just when it has seemed as if life was wearisome and unsatisfying—hardly worth the living—this great blessing comes to me. Oh, Elaine, I am greatly comforted; I am very thankful!"

"Yes, we have found each other just when we most need each other. Our Father knows best just when to send His good gifts to His children," reverently replied the young Countess. "I know all your trouble, dear, she went on, tenderly, "or, at least, enough of it to guess at the rest, and my heart has been very sore on your account; but we will be all in all to each other now; we will live together, and do good together, and try to forget our sorrows; or, if we cannot forget them, we can soften them by our love, and by doing for others."

But the words, submissive as they were, seemed to unseal the fountain of the fair girl's grief, and the two strangely united sisters abandoned themselves for the moment to its away.

Arley was the first to recover herself, and, wiping first her own and then Lady Elaine's tears, she said:

"Now, dear, tell me all about this strange discovery. I can scarcely realize it even yet, though my heart tells me that your words are true—that I am of one blood with you."

"It is like a romance," was the reply; "though there has always been something about you that has moved me strangely—something almost familiar in your looks and movements, although I never mentioned it to you."

"I presume I should have regarded it merely as a fancy if you had," Arley returned.

"Well, it was not a mere fancy, and now I am going to prove it to you;" and, as she spoke, Lady Elaine drew from her pocket a small package.

"Ah, such treasures as I have here!" she continued, smiling; "for without them it would have been almost impossible to prove your identity."

She removed the papers from it, and revealed a small black velvet case and a box. Opening the case, she disclosed a picture painted upon porcelain.

"Look, dear," she said, putting it into Arley's hand, "This is a portrait of our mother, taken just before her marriage. Now tell me if your face did not remind me of some one whom I had known."

Arley gazed upon it wonderingly.

There was, indeed, a striking resemblance, though nothing like that of Ina Wentworth to her mother.

The shape of the face in the picture was much like Arley's. The shapely brows, the curve of the dark, sweeping lashes, the large, liquid brown eyes, the piquant mouth and rounded chin, were strangely like the happy, spirited girl whom Lady Elaine had first met and loved at Hazlemere.

She gazed upon it breathlessly, holding it in her hand with a reverent clasp, her heart fluttering, like a restless bird, in her bosom.

"Was this my mother?" she whispered.

"Yes, our mother, dear; do not leave me out, please, for I am very jealous of my rights now that I have found my sister," Lady Elaine said, drooping her golden head upon Arley's shoulder. "Is it not strange that I could never think whom you resembled? do you not think that you are very like her?"

"Yes," Arley answered with tremulous lips, and I am so glad; while I believed myself to be Arley Wentworth it was always a grief to me that I could trace no resemblance in my features to those of my supposed father and mother. I remember that you told me when we were at Hazlemere that your little sister Alice was dark and very like your mother, while you were a thorough Mordaunt in form and feature. How happy I am to have this picture! but, oh, if she could have lived to own me her daughter, and hold me for one moment to her heart! Oh, Elaine, how I have wanted a mother all my life."

"Don't, dear," Lady Elaine cried, in a voice of pain, "do not let us begin to long for the impossible, for if we do our hearts will surely break," and Arley knew that she was thinking of Wil as she spoke.

She touched her lips softly to the white cheeks resting on her shoulder, and whispered with her eyes still on the beautiful picture:

"Tell me about her."

"There is not much to tell," Lady Elaine said, "for I was only ten years old when she died, but I remember her as gentle and sweet, very affectionate, but with a sadness about her which was extremely pathetic. This was caused, as I was afterwards told, by the loss of my little sister Alice, while returning from India where my father had been obliged to go upon political business soon after his marriage, and by the subsequent death of my only brother, who was the last of the Mordaunts. You have heard of that dreadful voyage from India from Jane Collins, so I will not repeat it; but you were supposed to be drowned and were always spoken of as being dead. You are two years older than I, for I was not born until some time after our mother's return to England. She devoted herself to me, but she could not get over the loss of her first-born, and almost the first thing I remember was her teaching me to say Allie, and telling me about my little dark-eyed sister. When I was three years old an heir was born to the house of Mordaunt, and my father's heart was filled with joy and pride, for now he believed that his name and title would be perpetuated. But Arthur only lived to pass his fifth birthday, and our mother never recovered from the shock occasioned by his death; she grieved until she undermined her health and gradually faded out of life. She died, as I have told you, when I was ten years old, and five years later my father was taken from me, leaving me to the guardianship of Sir Anthony Hamilton, only stipulating that I was to remain at the convent where he had placed me, except during the annual vacation, until my education was completed. So you perceive, Arley, that my life has been as lonely as your own, even more so, indeed, for you had Dr. and Miss McAllister, who, believing you to be the child of their dear one, loved you as their own. Oh, if we could only have known years ago that we belonged to each other how happy we might have been!"

(To be continued.)

UNSOUGHT.

"Woe is me," she cried, in her sorrow,
Eyelids drooping and full of pain;
"Woe is me in the sun or rain,
Grief is mine to-day and to-morrow.

"Mine is the woe of a woman's heart,
Wrung from the pain of a love unsought,
Wrung from a terrible longing wrought
For the love that drifted from me apart.

"Woe is me: for his sweet caresses
Fell on my lips and brow and hair.
Woe is me: for his kisses there
Thrill with a pain that burns, not blesses.

"I am his, but he claims me never;
I am his, but he is not mine;
Still I worship at love's dear shrine—
For I loved him once, and I love him ever.

"Woman's right is to give her treasure,
His is the right to laugh and scorn;
Mine is the love so lightly worn—
Naught he has given for love's full measure.

"Woe is me: for he loves me never,
Woe is me for the love unsought—
But oh, for the pain with kisses wrought—
For I loved him once, and I love him ever."

F. S. S.

CLIFFE COURT.

CHAPTER XX.

For some days after her parting with Colonel Stuart Lady Carlyon did not go out—did not even leave her own apartment, where she was attended to by Robson, and visited by Dr. West—her husband she did not see.

She did not rebel against Sir Ascot's orders that she should keep indoors, for she had neither the inclination or energy to resist them. She felt weak and languid, and her appetite had almost entirely deserted her; the only thing that helped to keep up her strength was a glass of port wine that she took every morning.

"I shall leave off Dr. West's medicines," she observed to Robson. "I am sure, instead of doing me good, they only weaken me."

"Do you think so, my lady? Dr. West is supposed to be a clever man, and I fancied he understood your ladyship's case."

"Perhaps it is more difficult for him to minister to a diseased mind than a diseased body," returned Alicia, in a low tone.

Robson had poured some mixture from a bottle, and now held it towards her mistress, who, however, turned from it with a gesture of distaste.

"I cannot drink it—it has such a sickly smell that it makes me feel quite faint."

The woman did not try to persuade her, but put the glass down.

"What will you have then, my lady? You know you have tasted nothing since yesterday, and you really require nourishment. I will get you some port."

She went into the next room, and returned with it. Lady Carlyon drank a little, and shivered slightly as she put down the glass.

"It is strange, but the wine tastes to me exactly as the medicine did," she remarked, wiping her lips with her handkerchief. "Are you sure you put it in a clean glass?"

"Quite sure, my lady. I am most particular in such matters."

"Yes, I know, but I fancied you might have made a mistake this time. It is strange it should have so curious an effect on me."

"Your ladyship's palate must be out of order," said Robson, calmly, "and the consequence is everything tastes alike to you."

"Perhaps that is it," assented Alicia, leaning wearily back in her chair—too listless to argue the point.

A strange numbness was stealing over her, taking all energy from limbs and brain. It was by no means a disagreeable sensation, rather, indeed, pleasurable in its effects, for it bathed her in a soft languor, during which all her troubles seemed to melt imperceptibly away, and she was only conscious of a sort of *dolce far niente* state, that must have somewhat resembled an opium-eater's dream.

Robson watched her keenly, but Lady Carlyon was oblivious of her scrutiny, and presently Dr. West came in.

"Is it all right?" he said, in a whisper, to the woman.

She returned his glance with one as significant.

"All right—she has taken the solution."

He nodded in a satisfied manner, and took a seat by Alicia's side, feeling her pulse, and looking very intently at her eyes, the pupils of which were considerably dilated. She did not appear to notice the closeness of his examination.

"I think it is safe to try," he muttered to himself; then aloud, and offering his arm he said, "Let me conduct you downstairs, Lady Carlyon."

She acquiesced without a moment's hesitation, putting her arm in his, and together they descended to the library, where the baronet awaited them, his face white and haggard, and his eyes anxious.

"Place a chair for your wife, if you please, Carlyon," said Dr. West, pleasantly. "I think she would prefer sitting at the head of the table there, with her back to the light."

Sir Ascot did as he was requested, and Alicia sat down, glancing vacantly at the papers with which the table was strewn.

"She will do," muttered the doctor, in a low voice, to Sir Ascot.

"Are you sure—quite sure?"

"As sure as it is possible to be under the circumstances. Remember, this is only an experiment, so I cannot answer positively for its result."

"If it should fail I am a ruined man," for this is my last day of grace," returned the Baronet, gnawing savagely at his moustache, while his eyes were fixed on his wife, to whom this conversation was inaudible. "The best thing for me will be a bullet in my brain."

"Nonsense! That is, indeed, a last resource! Call the butler in, and he can witness the deed."

The butler came—the same dark-browed man who had opened the door to Arline some time ago.

Alicia did not notice his entrance, and Sir Ascot explained to him that he was there for the purpose of witnessing his mistress's signature.

Dr. West put a pen in her fingers, and placing his hand on her shoulder—a familiarity which, strange to say, she did not resent—he bent down and said, in low, distinct tones,—

"Write your name here, if you please, Lady Carlyon—your name in full."

She obeyed passively, and wrote her signature.

"Alicia Mary Carlyon."

Then the butler and Dr. West appended their own names, and the former left the room.

"Well, what do you say to my experiment now?" asked West, as the door closed.

Sir Ascot grasped his hand.

"I owe you a debt of gratitude that I shall never be able to repay. You have saved me!" he exclaimed.

"That is all right. You can advance me the first instalment of the debt, which is five hundred pounds!" remarked the doctor, and Sir Ascot took out his cheque-book and wrote an order for the amount.

"That makes us square, I think?"

West put it away in his pocket-book, returning the baronet's IOU, and then Sir Ascot's attention became attracted by his wife, who

had fallen back in her chair, and was now in a deep slumber.

"How long will that last?" he inquired.

"I don't know. As I before reminded you, this is an experiment; and I cannot possibly say how it may terminate—whether she will retain any knowledge of what has passed, or whether it will all be a blank to her. We can only wait and see."

When Alicia awoke it was growing dusk, and for a minute she stared round, bewildered at finding herself in the library.

The sound of voices made her look towards the window, and there she saw her husband and Dr. West. As he perceived she was awake the latter came to her side.

"How do you feel, Lady Carlyon—quite yourself?" he asked, taking her hand.

"No; my head is not so clear as it ought to be, I think. Can you get me some water?"

He fetched her a glass, and she drank it.

"What brought me here?" she inquired, after a moment's silence.

"Think back, and see if you can remember!"

She put her hand to her brow, striving to collect her thoughts.

"I remember your bringing me down," she said, slowly, "and then—and then you told me to sign my name," she looked up, quickly, her eyes growing more intelligent. "What did I sign my name for?"

"Oh, nothing. A mere matter of form—no more."

"But I should like to understand," she persisted, never removing her gaze from his face. "I recollect I felt strangely dazed, and seemed to myself like one in a dream, who has no volition of his own. What was the cause of it?"

"Your delicate state of health, probably."

She shook her head, unconvinced.

"That is a poor explanation. You must have seen I was not myself. Why, then, did you bring me here for business matters?"

"My dear Lady Carlyon, you came of your own free will. I had nothing to do with cooing you. It is true I am a physician, but I am not omniscient for all that. I cannot be expected to look in my patient's minds, although I prescribe for their bodies."

She gave an impatient sigh, was quiet a few minutes, then started up, panting with excitement.

"I see it all. I have been tricked, deceived by both of you!" she cried out, her eyes flashing from West to her husband. "Between you, you have concocted some vile plot, by whose aid my powers of will deserted me, and while I was under the influence of drugs, perhaps, you have made me sign the mortgage!"

They neither made any attempt to reply, and Dr. West moved uneasily from her side.

"If this is the case—if my surmise is true—all England shall echo with the story of your baseness!" she continued, her voice ringing out, clear and shrill, through the vaulted apartment. "If I am a woman, weak and helpless, there are men in the world good enough and powerful enough to espouse my cause and punish you as you deserve, and I will call them to my aid. Do not think any consideration for the name I bear, or the publicity that will ensue, will have power to deter me. I tell you, Sir Ascot Carlyon, that even yet I am not conquered, and as long as life lasts I will defy you!"

It is impossible to describe how splendid she looked, as she stood before the two men, her whole frame instinct with the indignation that possessed her. Her cheeks were flushed, and she flung back from her face the long strands of hair that had become loosened during her slumber, and which now fell in thick, silky masses round her throat and shoulders.

Sir Ascot absolutely quailed under her gaze, and for a few minutes there was silence, while he looked helplessly at West, as though imploring him to come to his assistance. The

later made an effort to prove himself equal to the emergency.

"Don't excite yourself so much, Lady Carlyon," he said, soothingly; "if you do, I really cannot answer for the consequences."

"Do not speak to me, sir!" she exclaimed, with haughty contempt. "Henceforward there shall not even be the pretence of your acting as my medical attendant. If I require treatment I will endeavour to find a doctor who, in addition to his profession, is also a gentleman!"

Dr. West bit his lip till it bled; the taunt stung him to the quick, well as he knew it was deserved.

Alicia cast one glance of withering scorn on her husband, then advanced towards the door, where her progress was intercepted by the doctor.

"Let me pass, sir!" she said, imperiously.

"Pardon me, but in consideration for other people, it is my duty not to lose sight of you, for in your present condition it is impossible to say what you might do," he returned, suavely, holding her arm with a grip of iron. "In these cases one cannot exercise too much caution."

It was vain for her to attempt to move, and it was clear there was no chance of Sir Ascot coming to her assistance, for it was to his interest to acquiesce in Dr. West's plans.

"I shall accompany you upstairs myself, and put you in the care of your maid," he continued, his cold, steady eyes meeting hers. "She has been used to similar outbreaks, and will know how to treat them."

"What do you mean?" she asked; a strange, cold dread assailing her at his tones.

"I mean, Lady Carlyon, that you are mad, and must, therefore, be put under restraint for a time!" he hissed, bending down till his hot breath touched her cheek.

Alicia uttered a loud shriek, and fell back, half-fainting, as the full significance of the words dawned upon her. In the hands of these two men she was entirely helpless, for they were both utterly unscrupulous, and would hesitate at nothing. Verily, she met was taroona around her, and there was no chance of escape!

CHAPTER XXI.

ARLINE LEARNER was in her bedroom, busy packing up her boxes ready for her approaching departure, which was to take place the next day, for Hubert had been very anxious to see her settled in a fresh home before he himself left; and Dr. Fletcher had accordingly made arrangements for her to go at once to Mrs. Carroll, who had professed her willingness to receive her.

It was dreary work, going from one stranger's house to another; it made Arline feel her desolate position more keenly than ever, and she was sitting down on the floor, before one of the half-filled trunks, and indulging in a few tears, when Mrs. Belton entered.

"Crying!" exclaimed the housekeeper (who was in almost the same condition herself). "I wonder what you've got to cry about. You're surely not sorry to get away from this house."

"It is not that exactly, but I am in rather a despondent mood, and things seem so hopeless, somehow. I suppose it is because I'm silly."

"Very likely," responded Mrs. Belton. "I have observed that girls are never as well for something to weep over, and if they haven't a valid excuse they contrive to coin one. However, that's neither here nor there. I suppose you'll write to me sometimes?" she added, abruptly.

"Certainly, if you care to hear from me."

"Well, I should like to, now and then. I wish, with all my heart. I was going to leave, too. Cliffe Court will be very different with Lady De Bonbaix for its mistress. I was ached enough when she was only a visitor, for her whims and caprices were without number, but what it will be now it's impossible to guess. However, beggars mustn't be choosers, I sup-

pose, and as my bread-and-cheese happens to be here, here I must stay. I came to know if I could help you in your packing."

"No, thank you; I have almost finished."

"What time do you start in the morning?"

"Quite early; you know it is a long way to my journey's end, and it seems, from what Dr. Fletcher says, that I shall have to drive some distance after leaving the train. I want to go and wish Lady Carlyon good-bye this afternoon."

"Lady Carlyon!" exclaimed the housekeeper, starting. "I have just heard some very sad news about her; I was going to tell you of it, only other things put it out of my head. You know for a long time past there has been something wrong with her, and no one could exactly make out what it was, for both Sir Ascot, and the doctor who attends her, were very close about it, and made it a sort of mystery, but now they can't conceal it any longer. She is mad."

"Mad!" repeated Arline, in utter amazement. Then she burst into an incredulous laugh. "I do not believe it. Who could have told you such a ridiculous story?"

"Ridiculous or not, it is true, for Sir Ascot himself said so. He called this morning to condole with Lady De Bonbaix, or some rubbish of that sort, and I heard the news from his own lips."

"That does not make it any the more veracious. Alicia Carlyon mad! Why, her brain was as evenly balanced as that of any woman I know; and unless she has sustained some very great shock, you may depend upon it she is as sane as you or I."

Mrs. Belton looked dubious. She did not know Lady Carlyon, and was inclined to believe in her husband's assertion.

"He would not make a statement of that kind without having good ground for it," she said; "and, besides, I have heard the fact whispered abroad before—rumours like that generally have some foundation in them."

"Perhaps Sir Ascot himself spread the report!"

The housekeeper seemed surprised at the idea.

"What motive could he have for doing so?"

Arline did not reply—it was not her place to tell what she knew of her friend's private affairs, and without doing so it was impossible to answer Mrs. Belton's question.

She resolved to go at once to the Chase, and hastily finishing her packing she set off, thinking the while of the last time she had walked the same way—which was when she had met Esther Grant, and been escorted home by Lord Cliffe.

The door was opened to her by a footman, who was more communicative than the butler.

"My lady went away yesterday, miss, with her maid, and Sir Ascot, and Dr. West," he said, in answer to her inquiries. "Another doctor came down the day before to see her, and he said she must go away from the Chase at once, and have the most perfect quiet, as well as change of air, and as Sir Ascot wouldn't consent to her being taken to a lunatic asylum, she has gone to be under the care of a doctor who is considered clever in such cases."

Arline was dumfounded at the promptitude of the proceedings.

"But—but—surely there is no truth in the rumour I have heard of her having lost her senses?"

The footman shook his head with that species of melancholy enjoyment some people find under similar circumstances.

"I'm afraid that there can't be no doubt about it, miss," he responded. "You see, for a long time past she's been rather queer, but Sir Ascot and Dr. West have tried to keep it quiet, thinking she might get better. It was for that reason little Master Douglas was sent away, and Robson, the nurse, came—she had been attendant in a lunatic asylum before she came here—but last Monday, my lady got quite

violent—screamed, and made such a to-do as never was, and it was then the second doctor was sent for."

"Do you know where they have taken her to?"

"That I do not, but I'll inquire if you like, miss."

He did so, but the inquiries were futile, for the housekeeper either did not know, or had been instructed not to tell the address, and Arline turned away, baffled.

What to do in the matter she did not know, for it would be worse than useless to attempt to see Sir Ascot, and even if she succeeded in doing so the chances were ten to one the baronet would meet her inquiries with a request that she should mind her own business.

She had appointed to meet her lover at their old trysting-place, the wood; and when she got there she found him waiting and told him of her visit to the Chase.

"I saw Sir Ascot myself, this afternoon, and asked him about his wife," said Hubert; "and he told me the physicians held out every chance of recovery if she were kept quite quiet, so he has taken her to a house in the Midlands—he did not say exactly where. I feel the affair as much as you do, but I really can't see that we can do anything in it, for people would naturally say Sir Ascot was competent to manage his own business."

Arline acquiesced, with a sigh, and then they began talking of their own affairs.

"I shall see you off at the station, to-morrow morning, and after that, Heaven knows when we may meet again!" he said, sorrowfully enough. "Fate is rather hard to part us just as we have grown to love each other!"

"It might have been harder," she whispered, shyly, "for it might have prevented our meeting!"

"In which case we should never have known what we had missed. Love is a strange thing, Arline."

"So strange that it almost amounts to a mystery," she answered, in a voice that was nearly solemn. "Have you heard the Hindoo tradition, which says that the god Brahma cut a basket of pears in halves, and then mixed them all together, and let it be chance whether the right halves ever got joined? Well, it seems to me, the allegory is a very true one. God makes two human beings, who are formed for each other, in whose souls there are chords that would answer to no one else's touch—two, who if point of fate, make one perfect whole; and whose lives if they had not met, must have been incomplete for ever. It is not often they do meet; the chances are a thousand to one, or even less than that against it, but sometimes fate brings them together—as it has brought us!"

"And you will not mind separation—distance—the years that may part us?" he asked, as she ceased speaking.

"I shall mind nothing, so long as I have the assurance of your love!"

"And that you need never doubt," he told her, kissing her over and over again. "Whatever may betide, of this at least you may remain certain—that I shall be true to you!" It may be I am destined never to call you my wife, but if we meet after fifty years' absence, your image would still fill my heart."

"And your fancy would never wander, under the temptation of the many women so much more beautiful than myself, whom you will be sure to see?" she said, half playfully, and yet with a veil of serious earnestness lingering in her voice.

"Never! Don't you understand, dear, that you are the one woman in the world for me? I may admire others, but a man only loves once, however numerous may have been his fancies; and you, who are the ideal of everything that I hold pure and best in womanhood, are also the only one who ever touched my heart. What I should do without you, under my present trouble, I do not know; for when I feel most inclined to murmur and be de-

pressed, the thought of you comes to cheer me with hopes of the future, and I stifle vain regrets, and resolve to strive and conquer for your sweet sake!"

"And I, on my part, shall be always thinking of you—always praying for your success. I only wish I could do something to help you!"

"You do do something—you do a very great deal, for your influence is ever with me, and you don't know how much that means. I hope, my darling, you will be happy in your new home. I hate the idea of your going amongst strangers!"

Arline smiled bravely.

"It will not be so bad, I dare say. Dr. Fletcher says Mrs. Carroll is very kind and nice, and I have no doubt I shall be comfortable enough—I shall try to make myself so, at all events. When do you think of leaving Cliffe?"

"Directly after you are gone. I shall go, first of all, to London, and see old Mr. Daintree, who was the family solicitor some twenty years ago, but who has since retired from business in favour of his son. Perhaps he may be able to tell me something of the motives that induced my father to leave England, and this will give me a clue to work upon. Still, I dread to part of blossoming with my mother was energy and determination will accomplish a good deal, and I shall spare neither."

"Lady De Ronbair has told Mrs. Belton that she purposes suing up the Court for three months, and going abroad," observed Arline; "she has not looked at all well lately, she seems fidgety and restless, and wanders about the house a good deal, as if she were in search of something. I do not think her mind is at ease."

"I wish I knew how much or how little my uncle told her on the afternoon of his death," exclaimed Hubert. "I suppose you can't tell me how long his interview with her lasted?"

"Mrs. Belton thinks about half-an-hour, and she says Lady De Ronbair went into Lord Cliffe's room almost directly after you left it."

"I thought it must be so, for if he had waited until his passion cooled he would probably never have told her anything that passed between us. He was not a man fond of talking, as a rule, but Clarice seems to have obtained a good deal of influence over him. I dare say she will not be long before she marries, now that she is alone."

By this time it was growing late, and the slender silhouette of the young moon was shining above their heads, looking like a delicate silver boat on an azure sea, and warning Arline that it was time to get back to the Court. Hubert came with her as far as the plantation, and there they said good-bye—a good-bye that was to be said and not at least for some time—as this was the last occasion on which they would see each other alive; Mrs. Belton having announced her intention of accompanying Arline to her station the following morning, and Dr. Fletcher, having remarked that he, too, might be there—which was a sign of great favour on his part—for as a rule he was chary of the civilities, to say nothing of the courtesies of life.

And so, near the wood where they first met, they said farewell, and then each went his and her way. Who can say where and under what altered circumstances they may meet again!

CHAPTER XXII.

ARLINE'S journey to her new home was not a pleasant one. It was dull October weather, the skies were low and threatening, and throwing grey shadows over the landscape. There had been a good deal of rain lately, and the ditches were full of muddy water, the rivers swollen and turbid, the land obscured by a grey mist. Altogether it was an autumnal day of the dullest description, and Arline, sitting in a corner of her second-class compartment—for she had insisted on being economical, and had prevented Hubert from getting her a first-class ticket—thought the

weather was in unison with her own spirits, which grew more and more depressed as the distance increased between herself and Cliffe. She tried very hard to look on the bright side of things, and hope for better days to come; but it was hard work, and at last she broke down altogether, and yielded herself to her grief.

Luckily there was no one else in the carriage at the time, and a good cry did her good.

Afterwards she grew more composed, telling herself that it would never do to present herself before Mrs. Carroll with red eyes, and produce a bad impression on the very night of her arrival.

It was evening when she got to her journey's end, and the mist had settled into a steady down-pour of rain that blurred the carriage windows and made the station at which she alighted look dim and indistinct, lighted up as it was with dull oil lamps, whose flames were struggling to make themselves visible through the rain-misted glass.

"Richter, miss, please," said an official in livery, barring her progress, and Arline, having delivered it up, looked round helplessly uncertain what to do. She apparently attracted the attention of a middle-aged, country-looking man, who then came up to her.

"Be you the young woman, said about twenty, my missus is expecting?" he demanded.

"Who is your mistress—Mrs. Carroll?"

"Yes, that's her."

"Very well, then, I am the young woman she is expecting. I suppose you have a conveyance here?"

"Yes."

"Then you had better put my luggage up at once, and let me have no time in waiting."

"Right," was the answer, and Arline presently found herself in a sort of discomfort by the side of the man, whom she rightly surmised must be Mrs. Carroll's gardener.

He was not inclined to be communicative, neither did he manifest the slightest interest in his companion, his attention being chiefly directed to his horse, a big-boned, unsprung, who kept on at a steady jog-trot, heedless of the muddy whistles and strange noises made by his driver, apparently with a view of encouraging him.

It was impossible to see what sort of country they were passing, as a wall of fog on either side of the road shut out everything beyond; but after a drive of about two miles the man got down and opened a gate, and a few seconds afterwards the dog-cart was pulled up in front of a square brick house, from whose lower windows a pleasant light filtered through the crimson curtains.

A neat maid-servant helped Arline down, and ushered her into a sitting-room, where a bright fire was blazing, and a cozy tea set out on the table; and then a lady of about sixty, rather stout and comfortable-looking, with a kindly face, and grey hair, rose from an arm-chair, and came forward with outstretched hands.

"My dear, I am very glad to see you, and I hope you will make yourself happy here," she said, shaking hands. "You must be cold, and wet, and tired after your journey. Go upstairs and take your things off, and then a cup of tea will refresh you."

Arline was almost taken aback by the kindness of this greeting, for she had been preparing herself for a very different kind of reception. She murmured a few words of thanks; then went with the servant to her room, a comfortable little apartment, where a fire had been lighted in expectation of her coming. When she came down again, having changed her wet travelling dress, and put on clean collar and cuffs, she found Mrs. Carroll seated in front of the fire.

"I shall give this place up to you after to-day," the hostess remarked, with a pleasant smile, as she motioned Arline to a seat near her. "I am getting old and lazy, and I find the less I do the less I want to. It is different with young people who like exertion, and

activity. Now, you must help yourself to a outlet," she continued. "I know you haven't had any dinner, so, of course, you must be hungry."

Arline did not deny the impeachment; she had eaten nothing all day, and therefore did justice to the repast before her, which was a very tempting one—home-made bread and butter, fresh laid eggs, jams, marmalades, and the catlets. Evidently Mrs. Carroll was thoughtful for the comfort of other people.

When they had finished, and the things were cleared away, Mrs. Carroll resumed her seat in the armchair, and took up some knitting.

"Draw up to the fire, Miss Lester, and let me talk a bit," she said, "and then I can set your mind at ease with regard to what is expected of you in the way of duties. For a long time I have lived alone with my two servants, and have been happy enough in my quiet way, for you must know I am no great lady, but only the widow of a country farmer, and am accustomed to a gay life. I see very few visitors, the country people will not condescend to visit me, and the tenant farmers, although there are not exactly my stamp either, as between the two stools I fall to the ground. Still, as long as I could get about and garden, and see that things went straight, I was happy enough; but since my paralytic seizure, although it has not taken away the power from my limbs, I am different to what I used to be—less strong, and more easily knocked up, and I have found it very lonely, for my evenings is not particularly good, and I don't strain at reading. I shall, therefore, require you to read to me, and you will also look after the house in the mornings, and walk or drive with me in the afternoons. You are a good walker, I presume?"

"Very good; at least, I don't get tired."

"That's right. I think, my dear," added Mrs. Carroll, bending forward to look into the young girl's eyes, "I think, if I may be allowed to judge on so short an acquaintance, that we shall get on very well together."

"Indeed, I hope so!" Arline exclaimed.

"And I also think you will be a great help and comfort to me. I like young people, although I am old myself. I never had any children," she sighed; "but once a very dear niece lived with me, and took the place of a daughter. She is dead. Poor Daisy!"

She relapsed into silence, and gazed dreamily at the fire, as though she saw pictures of the past in the unpleasing flames; and Arline refrained from disturbing her reverie out of a delicate consideration. Presently she looked up and smiled.

"I am afraid you think me a very foolish old woman, Miss Lester, do you not?"

"Indeed, no."

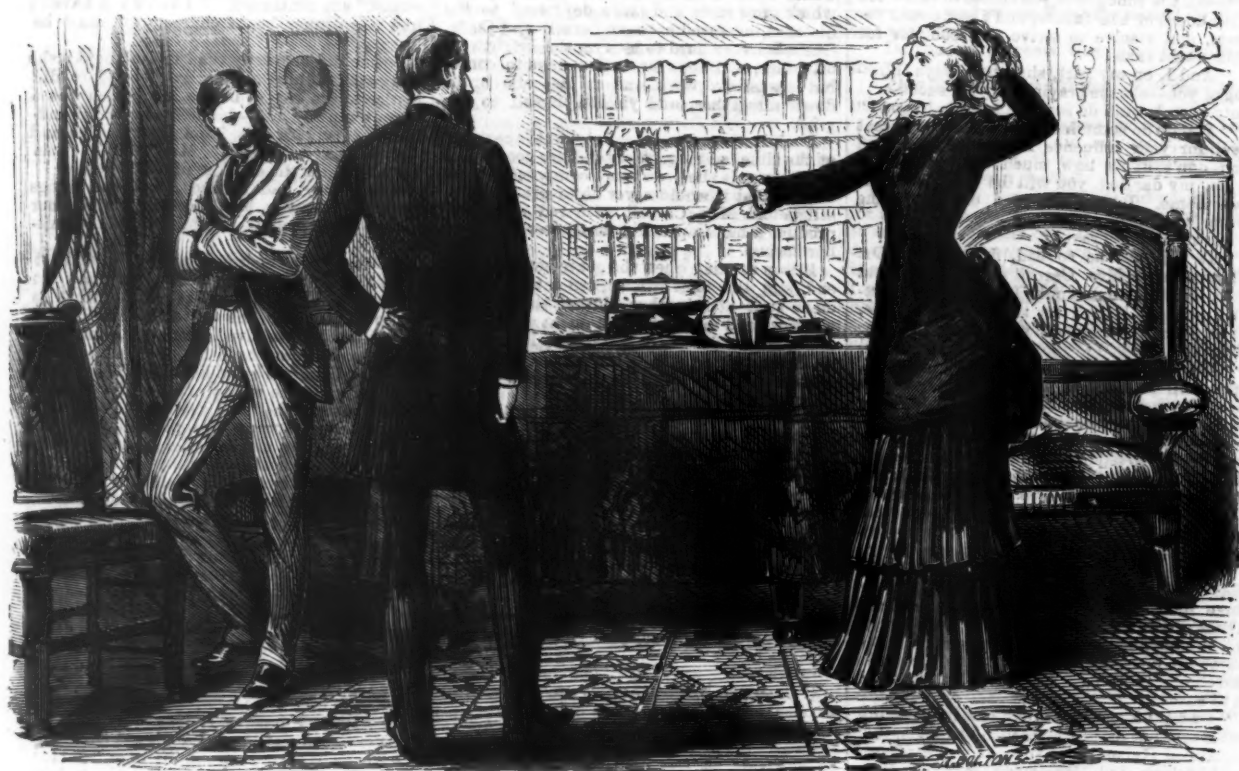
"There are some words of Longfellow's that I was thin king of, and that describe my feelings," added Mrs. Carroll, and with a perfect simplicity she repeated them:

"There are things of which I may not speak,
There are dreams that cannot die; but one is true,
There are things that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek, and lead me
And a mist before the eyes, and I stand
And the words of that beautiful songling
Are haunting my memory still, and I find
A boy's will is the wind's will, and the thoughts
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

"They are beautiful lines, are they not?"

"Very beautiful," Arline responded.

"And they embody my ideas at that particular moment quite accurately. I hope you are fond of poetry, Miss Lester, for I shall want you to read a good deal of it aloud to me. I do not, as is the fashion nowadays, rave over Browning and Swinburne; because I cannot understand them, but I love that grand old American, who never wrote a line but what is stamped with truth and purity, as well as beauty. The New World has reason to be proud of her Longfellow."



BETRAYED BY HER OWN HUSBAND.

Mrs. Carroll was one of nature's own ladies. She had never been to a fashionable boarding school, had never gone into society, and knew nothing of the great world; but for all that you might have searched England through, and failed to discover a more refined woman—not perhaps, in the outward polish that contact with society gives, but in thoughts and actions.

She had read a good deal, too, and Arline found her a most amusing and intelligent companion, while she, on her part, rejoiced in the society of the fair-faced girl, to whom she had taken a fancy on the very night of her arrival. Arline declared, and with truth, that her lines had fallen in very pleasant places; she had nothing menial to do, her time was her own when she wanted it, and the sympathy that existed between herself and her employer very soon ripened into affection.

It was true, as Mrs. Carroll had said, she saw very few visitors, but there was a good garden and greenhouse to wander about in, as well as several very pretty walks in the vicinity, while the library was placed entirely at her disposal—altogether she had every reason to thank Providence and Dr. Fletcher, for having guided her here.

She and Mrs. Carroll often went for drives in the pony chaise, and on one occasion, as they were returning home by a different route to any they had ever taken before, they passed a high, grey stone wall, in the middle of which were big wooden doors, one of them being open.

"What place is that?" inquired Arline, driving slowly past.

"It is called the Priory, and has been vacant for many years until this summer, when someone was courageous enough to take it, in spite of the evil reputation it had acquired. I don't know who the tenant is."

"It looks gloomy enough from the outside."

"Yes, the gates are closed, as a rule; this is the first time I have ever seen them open—and I declare Fritz has gone inside!"

"Fritz" was the retriever that always ran by the side of the carriage, and, whether prompted by motives of curiosity or a suspicion of rabbits cannot be said; but, at any rate, Fritz on this occasion prove himself extremely disobedient and unmanageable, for he refused to listen to his mistress's persuasions, and could be heard from the outside forcing his way through the laurels that formed part of a plantation entirely surrounding the house. Arline called, and Mrs. Carroll called, but it was of no avail, and at last the former got out of the carriage, and went in search of the dog.

A narrow path led up between two high walls of shrubs, and on getting to the end of this the house faced you,—about as gloomy looking a habitation as can well be imagined. It was square, and built of grey stone, that by age and damp had assumed a greenish hue; here and there, where the spouting had given way, were long dark stains arising from the moisture, and it was quite evident that the money expended in repairs—to say nothing of painting or decorating—had been reduced to a minimum. To add to its repellent aspect all the upper windows were barred, and some of them frosted over on the lower panes.

Arline was looking up at the latter, when, to her great astonishment, a hand was pushed between the bars, and a handkerchief waved, apparently with the idea of attracting her attention. Almost immediately, however, it was withdrawn, and the window closed with a swiftness that nearly amounted to violence, and at that moment Fritz, having satisfied himself that there were no rabbits, came bounding up, wagging his tail as a profession of penitence, and his willingness to return to the paths of virtue.

Arline had no excuse for remaining, and therefore retraced her steps, and got into the carriage again, telling Mrs. Carroll of the incident that had occurred.

"It is strange," remarked the latter, "perhaps it was some child at play."

"I don't think so. The hand was white and small and delicate, but it belonged to a woman," responded Arline. "What a horrid place to live in! It is desolate enough to drive one mad, and damp enough to kill one."

"It certainly cannot be healthy, for it lies low, and there are marshes all round, to say nothing of the fogs to which it is liable. It was for that reason it remained empty so long, I believe; and I never was more surprised than when I heard it was taken, for to a delicate person the situation must mean death. The owner is a gentleman who spends all his time abroad, and leaves the property to be looked after by his London agent, and I suppose they neither of them thought it worth while keeping the place in proper repair. The land all round ought to be drained, in order to make it anything like healthy—at present it certainly must be the very reverse, and ought to be condemned as unfit to be inhabited."

(To be continued.)

The great moments of life are but moments like the others. Your doom is spoken in a word or two. A single look from the eyes, a mere pressure of the hand, may decide it; or of the lips, though they cannot speak.

A USEFUL LESSON.—Nothing teaches patience like a garden. All have to wait for the fruits of the earth. You may go round and watch the opening bud from day to day; but it takes its own time, and you cannot urge it on faster. If forced, it is only torn to pieces. All the best results of a garden, like those of life, are slowly, but regularly progressive. Each year does a work that nothing but a year can do. "Learn to labour and to wait" is one of the best lessons of a garden. All that is good takes time, and comes only by growth.



["I THINK I HAVE SEEN YOU BEFORE TO-NIGHT, MISS ORMOND!" THE EARL VENTURES AT LAST.]

NOVELETTE.]

A BLOT ON THE 'SCUTCHEON.

—o—

PROLOGUE.

IN a fashionable part of Paris, near the Rue St. Honoré, stands a large white mansion, of an elegant and imposing appearance; possessed of several suites of lofty rooms, gaily, even richly furnished, with, however, the perfect taste peculiar to the Gaul. It is the *école*, or educational establishment of Monsieur and Madame Léon, a couple of Parisians of the *bourgeois* class, who by dint of hard work, unflinching energy, craft, and a certain amount of cleverness, have worked their way up until they are the possessors of one of the most flourishing schools in the gay capital of France.

Their pupils are composed entirely of the daughters of the nobility, and those of persons of wealth and rank, not only of their own country. Several English and American girls study under the eminent pastors and masters at Madame Léon's as well as French *démoiselles*. All are more or less beautiful and interesting, but undoubtedly the belle of the school is Addrienne de Sormis, the only child of Raoul, Comte de Sormis—a man whose blood is blue, who belongs to the old noblesse, who figures in the world of Paris as a fashionable man, and is supposed to be wealthy, but who, in reality, is poor—so poor that it is with difficulty he scrapes together money enough to pay for his daughter's education.

He manages to do so, and to give her a cheque occasionally for dress, by living in private in a mean, sordid way; dining at third-rate cafés off doubtful-made dishes and cheap wines, living on the fourth floor in small rooms, and omitting with praiseworthy perseverance to pay his tailor's bills, or indeed any bill that is presented to him.

He is handsome, wonderfully so, notwithstanding that more than fifty years have

passed over his head, and his manners are polished and fascinating to the last degree. But there is a want of sincerity about him, a restless glitter about the full dark eye, too firm a curve in the well-cut mouth to make him altogether pleasant to look at or reliable as a friend.

And, truth to tell, the Comte de Sormis has few—woefully few—friends. Acquaintances plentifully, especially among people who have no handle to their name, and who love a lord or the possessor of a title, but among his own set he is somewhat shunned and avoided.

There are queer tales afloat to the effect that the Comte displays a little too much dexterity in manipulating the dice-box, and is singularly lucky at cards. In fact, some bold spirits declare that he adds to his slender income by unfair means, and as the said bold spirits are frequenters of card-rooms and gambling cafés, they possibly know something about it. Still he manages, despite these disadvantages, to hold his own, and enjoys himself in a way.

Raoul de Sormis is not altogether a bad man; there are a few green places in his heart still, though dissipation and want of money are fast searing and withering them. One good trait is his love for his daughter. He is having her trained for a public singer, as her mother—a fair English girl he met in London and loved, and who as his wife brightened his life for a few years—had been; not without some qualms of conscience, some bitter regrets, that the last, the very last scion of his old, blue-blooded race, should have to sing for hire. Yet he is getting old, his debts grow day by day, and his reputation as a fortunate card player is increasing; so there is nothing for it but to let Addrienne make money out of the glorious voice she has inherited from her English mother. He cannot starve in his old age, and knows that with her singular beauty she is certain to be a success.

"Tell me, my very dear one, that this profession for which you are training is to your liking?"

"Dear father, you know it is."

Father and child are walking in the spacious garden at the back of the Léon's house. The soft April wind stirs the dark purple foliage of the beech, and rustles amid the *broches*' trails of beautiful flowers that droop like branches of waving gold, and bears on its wings the perfume of violets. The sun smiles down on the trim daisy-decked lawn, its warm gleams lighting up the yellow celandine, and blue forget-me-nots, and making a sort of halo round Addrienne's fair head.

"You would not like to give it up now? to relinquish the idea of some day becoming a Jenny Lind or a Titiens?" he goes on after awhile, looking at her keenly.

"No, indeed," she answers gaily, lifting the large brown eyes—so like and yet so unlike his own—to his face. "I should be very—very sorry to give up my singing—my prospects of some day being a celebrity."

"Little vanity!" he murmurs.

"And have I not something to be vain about, dear father? Monsieur de Solnac told me only this morning that my upper notes are perfect, and Madame says the kindest things in the world about my voice."

"Indeed!" responded the Comte; "are Monsieur and Madame Léon as kind as ever?"

"Yes, quite, I think I have more privileges and more freedom than any other girl in the school."

Which is certainly the case, Addrienne is Madame Léon's especial pet, and is spoiled by the crafty designing woman, who has a base end in view.

The Comte has impressed them with a sense of his own wealth, rank, and importance, knowing full well that the daughter of a rich man, or a supposed rich man, will receive far more care and attention than the daughter of a needy and disreputable gamester. He man-

ages entirely to deceive the Léons, and by the help of the cheque-books of an extremely wealthy, but low-born silk merchant (who lends him anything and everything, even considerable sums of money, in order to induce the Comte to walk arm-in-arm with him in the "Bois" or the Champs Elysées), which he leaves about, and pretends to forget, leaving them in a conspicuous place on Madame's table, gives them the idea that he is in affluent circumstances. This, coupled with the fact that Addrienne is the daughter of a long line of titled ancestors, makes Madame Léon endeavor to bring about a marriage between her son and her eldest son, Adolphe, a young man of great personal beauty and fascinating manners; but at heart like his mother, cold, crafty, and designing—a man without morals or good feeling, selfish, indolent and extravagant.

He has given his parents a vast amount of trouble, almost from the time of his birth, owing to his extravagant ways, love of display and recklessness. Had been a drain on their income, and a constant source of anxiety to them. Therefore nothing would please Madame Léon more than to entrap the daughter of a wealthy noble, into a marriage with her scape-grace son.

She has heard some rumors that are not much to the credit of the Comte, but she gives little heed to them, being blinded and dazzled by his grand airs, and assumption of dignity and importance. Besides, she reasons, if Blanche be penurious, her magnificent voice is almost as good as an estate, and would bring in a good income, so she steadily encourages the young girl's admiration of Adolphe's handsome face, and throws them constantly into each other's society, and leads her on slowly, but surely, to regard him in the light of a lover.

Addrienne, inexperienced and impressionable, romantic as girls of seventeen usually are, easily becomes the dupe and victim of those who plot and scheme her undoing, and yielding to the young man's passionate appeals, has promised, so long to become his wife.

As she stands in the flower-filled garden by her father's side, her thoughts are full of the man who is to be her husband, and of the bright future that lies before her, when as his wife and well-known singer she can change riches and luxuries on him. She does not love him really—truly. It is only the gratification of extreme youth that sits in her heart and if the father, who, whatever his faults, loves her dearly, knew of it, he could with a few words smother the madness and folly of the step she proposes to take. But, unfortunately, he knows nothing of the matter, so soon to be done him. Adolphe, with his sophistry and flattery, has persuaded her to keep silent, telling her that his heart will be broken, his life wrecked and blasted if the Comte objects to their union, and takes them from him; and Addrienne, somewhat alarmed by his passion and vehemence, promises to do as he bids, and leave the disclosing of their matrimonial intentions until after the fatal knot is tied.

"You are quite happy, then?" continued Raoul de Sormes, as they take another turn under the golden-branched birches. "You would not care to leave Madame Léon's just at present?"

"Leave! Oh, no father," responds the girl, quickly, a frightened look in her brown eyes. "There is no necessity for me to leave, is there?"

"Not at present, unless you wish it. I thought, though, you wished to go to Milan to study under Signori Tesemano and Cavallo for a few months? And there is nothing, I think, like a residence in Italy, and a careful course of training under Italian masters, for improving the voice."

"I did a year ago, but now—now," she falters. "I don't really think that it is necessary—not at all necessary. Monsieur de Sormes is such an excellent master, and I have the benefit of Madame Léon's experience when I

am practising, and that is a great advantage, as she has much taste in musical matters—used to be a good vocalist herself—and gives me many hints with regard to expression and proper production of the notes."

"Yes; still I think the Italians alone possess the art of teaching that wonderful tenderness of expression, that soft, piano delivery, which is noticeable in all who have resided for a while in the sunny south, and prosecuted their studies there."

"Do you really?"

"Tide, indeed."

"Then you think that I shall not be a finished singer unless I go there?"

"I think exactly say that, but I think it would improve you."

"And make any chance of success?"

"Yes, undoubtedly."

"You hardly think I need go. I have made wonderful progress during the last six months," besides," she added, quickly, a flush rising to her cheek, a light in her soft, dark eyes, "think what a great expense it would be to you. The journey, my apartments, my board; and then those famous masters ask such exorbitant prices for even a single lesson."

"True; still I don't mind that, dear," he replies, letting his eyes dwell fondly on the lovely face—so innocent, so charming—of his only child: "if this—"

"I mind, though," she breaks in, eagerly, forgetting her natural timidity in her dread of anxiety not to be sent away. "I am sure now that you make no end of sacrifices for me, deny yourself many things, and I cannot be a greater burden to you, dear father, a greater expense than I am."

"I don't mind that in the least," he repeats, kindly, "if the expenditure would conduce to your success in the profession you are going to adopt, and make you gain more fame and renown."

"It would not do that. It—it is not necessary. I think," stammer Addrienne, turning from red to white and white to red in her face, "that her father will send her away from Paris just as the day of her bride."

"You are really of that opinion?" he queries, seriously. "You really think that you are getting on very well, and do not require other instructors?"

"I do, indeed," she acquiesces earnestly, "and I am sure that if I went away, and was surrounded entirely by strangers, I should not get on half so well. I should be miserably unhappy and depressed, disinclined to study, or take any interest in my work, and should retrograde instead of improve. It is wretched to be quite alone in a foreign country, father, is it not?"

"Well, perhaps, my dear, to a young girl," he says, and she does not speak again.

"It would be to me. I dread going among strangers, and leaving all those I love here in France."

Tears stand in her starry eyes as she speaks; there is a piteous little quiver about the rosy, curved lips, and the Comte as he sees it rejoins good-humoredly,—

"Very well, stay here, then, if that pleases you best. I don't want you to do anything that would make you unhappy."

"Oh, thanks, dear father," she cries, joyfully, clasping her hands with delight; as having gained his consent to her remaining at the Pension where her worthless lover dwells, "it will please me best to stay here."

"That is settled then. What changeable creatures you women are," he continues, looking at her with a keenness in his glance which brings the bright colour into her delicate cheeks with a burning wave; "in less than a year to alter all your plans, ideas, and wishes so entirely. I wonder how the world would get on if men were like you? In a curious fashion, I imagine."

"Curious, perhaps, but nice all the same. A year ago my voice was undeveloped, and I thought it necessary to go to Italy. Now,

however, I have made so much progress that I do not consider it is necessary," she concludes, with a demure little voice.

"Oh, indeed, that is satisfactory," he remarks, laughingly. "At any rate, little one, I hope you will win both fame and gold."

"Thanks! I hope I shall," she answers softly, "for your sake, and Adolphe's," she murmurs to herself; continuing aloud, "then I shall be able to repay you all you have spent on my education."

"Don't speak of that, dear," he says with much tenderness, for he feels just a wee bit guilty. He has heard her declare, with no little relief, that she does not wish to leave Paris; for though he is willing and ready to do all in his power for the welfare of the only being on earth whom he loves, still he knows that a journey to and residence in the south would be a terrible drain on his slender resources, and reduce him to almost abject poverty.

"But I must speak of it, I can never think you enough."

"Don't try, my child."

"I can't persuade my little girl to leave you, Madame Léon," he goes on, as she slowly steps through the long French window onto the trim daisy-pied lawn, and comes towards them, her rich silk gown, one of Worth's masterpieces, put on in honour of the Comte's visit, trailing half a yard behind her, and rustling noisily as she moves along with majestic mien and imposing statelyness, fair without and false within, from the crown of her elaborately dressed head, with its adornments of costly lace, to the sole of her lavishly embroidered *brodequin*.

"Indeed?"

"Yes, I am afraid you have made too much of her."

"Why?"

"Because she is so loth to leave you, refuses to do so. That looks as though she was a pet here—quite spoiled, in fact."

"That would be impossible, monsieur," replied Madame, with an airy wave of her podgy beringed white hands, and a gracious bend of her elaborate head and stout body. "Mam'selle Addrienne is too good, too angelique, too amiable to be spoiled. Nothing could alter or warp so sweet and docile a disposition," and Madame gives another stately bend of the ace lappets, another wave of her podgy fingers, and shoots, meanwhile, a sharp glance at father and child, wondering what they have been talking about.

"You flatter me, do me too much honour, praising my child, so much," murmurs the Comte, in his best style, accompanying the words with such a twain and flourish of his hat, that it almost touches the ground. "I trust she deserves it."

"She more than deserves it. No praise could be too high—too great for her. She is my best pupil."

"Thanks, thanks, madame," again murmurs de Sormes.

"Is there any reason, why, madame, she should leave us?" queries the arch-complainer, letting none of the uneasiness and foals appear on her carefully preserved, skilfully made-up face. "Is Monsieur le Comte not satisfied with the progress madame, she has made?"

"Quite, quite, madame, I assure you," he rejoins hastily, not wishing to offend her. "Only some time back, Addrienne expressed a wish to go to Milan, and to-day I asked her if she still wished it."

"I don't think it necessary now, madame, do you?" ventures the young girl timidly, not daring to lift her eyes to the crafty woman's face, only fixing them intently on the tip of her richly-embroidered *brodequin*.

"By no means, my dearest," she answers promptly. "De Sormes is from the Conservatoire, and is one of their best masters. He is more than satisfied with your progress, and so am I. It is quite wonderful the advance you have made during the past year. Your voice is rounder, more flexible; your upper notes clearer and stronger, your produc-

tion of it becomes better day by day. I may safely say that you will soon be perfect, soon be ready to appear before the public." This was a little exaggeration on the part of Léon more, but being one of those people who think everything is fair in love and war, she saw no reason why she should not use any means, no matter how dishonourable, to gain her end. "So unless Monsieur wishes it, there is no necessity, no reason why you should leave us, and the additional expense incurred," she concludes craftily, with a second sharp glance at the Comte.

"I do not wish it, madame. I feel sure she could not be in better hands," he replies, gallantly, with another terrific flourish of his rakish hat.

"Thank you, thank you."

"No, it is for me to thank you for all the tenderness and care you have bestowed upon my daughter. I feel the debt is so great that I shall never be able to pay it."

"Monsieur is too kind," simpered Gabrielle Léon, and she heaves a sigh of relief five minutes later when De Sormes, after kissing his child on either cheek, takes his leave with many polite and pretty speeches and many flourishes of his hat and hands.

"What have you and your father been talking about, Adrienne?" she demands, when he was gone.

"About my going to Milan, chiefly."

"And what else?"

"Of the chances of my succeeding in the musical profession."

"And what besides?"

"Nothing else, I think, madame."

"Don't think, be sure."

"I'm sure," rejoins the young girl, shrinkingly, for her interlocutor's voice is sharp and abrupt, quite different from the soft, sweet tones she adopted for the Comte's benefit.

"You spoke of nothing else?"

"No."

"Not a word about your—your intended marriage?"

"No, madame," returns Mademoiselle De Sormes, naively. "You told me so."

"That is quite right. There is nothing I dislike," continues Madame Léon, with a severe and virtuous expression, "more than concealing anything from a parent, but in this case it is absolutely necessary to conceal everything from your father."

"Why?" demands Adrienne, timidly.

"Because he is a great noble, rich, and powerful—the riches and power exist only in madame's imagination. She has persuaded herself that he is one of the wealthy old nobles, and nothing save a perfect avalanche of facts will disabuse her mind of the erroneous impression it had received—" with blue blood in his veins, and a pedigree dating back to the Carolingian days, while Adolphe is my son, the son of a woman who has risen from the people, and who, moreover, is not ashamed to own it!" this was announced in a grandiloquent style that was highly ludicrous, with the usual wave of the podgy hand. "He has no blue blood in his veins, no long line of titled ancestors, no great heritage. He is simply one of nature's gentlemen (heaven save the mark!), without lands or pedigree, and he loves you madly, devotedly. Does he not?"

"I—I think so," falters the young girl, blushing rosily.

"You think so? Do you not know that he adores you?" demands her mother, sternly.

"He says so," agreed her companion, with a fresh accession of naivete.

"He not only says it, he does it," continues the elder woman, impressively, wishing her victim to be overwhelmed by the amount of love lavished on her.

"Yes."

"And I begin to think that you do not properly appreciate, or hold at its true worth, my boy's affection for you!"

"Indeed I do, madame," expostulates Adrienne, thinking of the passionate appeals and

vehement declarations to which she has so recently listened, and which have made her consent to keep her intended marriage a secret from the Comte.

"And you love him?"

"Oh, yes!" she acknowledges, with charming confusion and many blushes.

"That is well. Your love must carry you through a great deal, for your father naturally expects you to marry one of his own order—a noble of high degree—and may be angry at first when he hears that you have preferred love to grandeur, and have married a man with little or no money, no title, nothing, in fact, to recommend him to you, save his deep absorbing affection, which is as great as ever man lavished on woman."

Crafty Gabrielle Léon knows that is her trump card and plays it, being well aware that the innocent young girl before her will be flattered at being the object of such a grand passion.

"Yes," murmured Adrienne, "he will be angry at first, but he will forgive me after, will he not?"

"Of course he will," assents her companion, "and you will be happier with Adolphe than you would be with any other man."

"Yes, oh, yes."

"But, madame," she falters a minute later, as a thought strikes her, "if my father does not know of my marriage how can we obtain his consent, which is necessary, is it not, to legalise it?"

"Who told you it was necessary?" demands madame, sharply.

"I—I hardly know; hardly remember."

"One of those chattering girls from Marseilles, I suppose?"

"Yes," acknowledges the young fiancée, reluctantly. "I think it was Aimee Viellibery."

"Ghst," returns Gabrielle Léon, grimly, "she knows too much."

"But she is going to be married herself next summer," expostulates Adrienne, "and she told me that it would not be legal unless both her parents consent. Is that not so?"

"It may be down where she lives; it is not needed here."

"Really? She was not right, then?"

"No, decidedly wrong," rejoins Madame, untruthfully and telling the lie boldly, for she knows that the Comte's consent can never be obtained by fair means, and that it will therefore be necessary to make her victim believe that it can be done without.

"I am glad of that."

"So am I," remarks her companion.

"For I don't think my father would give his consent just now."

"No, neither do I, and you need not be afraid, my dear one. I will see that everything is quite correct, and that you are legally married to my boy."

And then the crafty woman paces up and down the sunlit garden, under the purple-foliaged beeches, using all the eloquence she is possessed of to persuade and convince Adrienne; and it is an easy task, she is so childlike and innocent, so utterly ignorant with regard to the laws of her country, that her marriage would be legal without the consent of her father. This is not so, and madame knew it well enough, but she also knew that when the Comte heard of the affair that he would be only too glad to give his consent to her being re-married, made a legal wife, to avoid a horrible scandal, and silence wagging tongues.

"What are you doing?" demands Madame Léon, sharply, some seven or eight days later, as she enters her own particular private room and finds Adolphe seated before her bureau, which he has taken the liberty of opening with skeleton keys, and the contents of which are littered about the floor.

"What are you doing?" she reiterates, as he takes not the smallest notice of her remark or presence.

"Looking over your papers," she rejoins, coolly.

"What for? How dare you open my places? I won't have it."

"You can't stop me."

"Yes, I can, and I will too."

"No, you can't, so don't excite yourself," and he leans back in his chair and looks up at her angry face, with a sardonic smile on his handsome mouth.

For a moment or two mother and son regard each other fixedly, then she says, quietly,—

"What are you looking for?"

"Is that any affair of yours?"

"Of course it is. Come, tell me, Adolphe."

"Well," he replies, slowly, "I am looking for a letter or a specimen of the Comte de Sormes's handwriting."

"What for?"

"You are curious, mother."

"Of course I am about anything that concerns him."

"Where have you put his letters?"

"Tell me what you want them for first."

"Peste," he mutters angrily, "how curious women are! I want to study his writing in order to be able to copy it."

"Copy it?" she echoes.

"Yes, copy it. You seem to forget that we shall want some sort of a consent from him to produce at the Misria."

"No, I don't," she rejoins, quickly. "I have come to talk to you about it."

"That's all right, then. Bring out his letters."

And madame obeys the imperious mandate, and then the arch-conspirators scan them narrowly, and remain talking and writing for several hours, and the result of their labour is a pretty little document purporting to come from Raoul Comte de Sormes, and giving his full and free permission to the marriage of his daughter Adrienne with Adolphe Léon.

"Good thing he's gone to England for a while," says the young man, as he finishes his task; "it will make it easier for us to mislead and hoodwink all parties."

"Yes," agrees his mother. "I don't think we shall meet with any difficulties."

And they do not. Three weeks after the signing of the civil contract Adrienne becomes the wife of Adolphe Léon, all obstacles being smoothed over by the help of the forged document, and ere many days are past she realises what a fearful mistake, what an awful error, she has made. Once married and in his power, the schemer, who has become her master, shows himself in his true colours, and shocks her refined delicacy with his coarse brutality and low manners. There is no one to stand between them. Madame "won't interfere between husband and wife," she says, smiling snavely, and the young girl is utterly at his mercy—utterly helpless and powerless.

She longs for her father to come to her, as she has never longed before, yearning for his voice and see his face, and be greeted with the never-failing tenderness which he has invariably shown her. She has written to him, but no answer reaches her. What is the meaning of his strange silence? she wonders. Why does he not write, he who loves her so well, who has always been, no matter what his faults to others, so unfailingly kind and tender to her? She racks her brain for a reason, worrying herself to a shadow, becoming thin and pale in her distress, endeavouring to find a solution to the mystery.

After a time she gathers from a word dropped by her husband, in a fit of rage, that she is a sort of prisoner, and, as the days go on, she realises her bondage more fully, and finds that all her actions are closely watched, and that it is only sometimes of an evening that she is relieved from the espionage of her cruel enemies; and a terrible despair, a blank sense of desolation, an awful agony takes possession of her soul. She is full of an intangible fear as she stands by the window in her own little room, watching the rain as it dashes violently against the glass, and streams

in torrents along the garden below, and she is so absorbed with her sad thoughts that she does not hear the door open, and is unaware anyone is in the room until her arm is roughly clutched, and, looking up, she sees her graceless husband beside her, his face black with passion, his eyes blazing furiously.

"Pauper—miserable pauper!" he hisses between his teeth, "I have found you out, and that miserable old fellow, your father!"

"What do you mean? How dare you speak of my father in such terms?" she asks, indignantly, drawing up her slight form to its full height.

"Dare," he repeats, with a coarse laugh; "dare, why who wouldn't dare? He is known all over Paris as a tricky gamester, a disreputable blackleg, a ruined gentleman, who lives by his wits, who never pays a bill, who cheats and defrauds honest, hardworking folk like my mother and—"

"Oh! stop—stop!" she implores, clasping her hands. "He is my father."

"Stop—why should I stop?" he goes on, brutally. "He has tricked and trapped me finely by his fraudulent representations. Here I am, tied to you—to you who haven't a brass farthing!"

He is well aware that he is not tied to her, his marriage being illegal, but he does not intend to tell her so, knowing that he will have greater power over her if she believes him her husband, and it will be quite time enough, he thinks, to cast her off if he finds she cannot make money by her singing.

"Why did you marry me?" she asks, faintly.

"Because I thought you were the daughter of a rich nobleman," he answers, with cruel distinctness; "and because I thought the marriage would be an advantage to me."

"You never loved me, then?" queries poor Addrienne, wildly.

"Loved you? Pooh! All the love I have to give is bestowed elsewhere, on a very different sort of woman. I wanted luxury and comfort, and thought I'd get both with you; but that old fop, your father, has cheated and tricked me with his grand airs and other people's cheque-books. Heaven and earth—so think he has been too many for me—for me!" And he shakes his clenched hands in the air, in his impotent rage.

"I'll make you pay for it though, my lady," he cries, savagely, dropping his hand so heavily on her shoulder that she sways under it; "you shall work like a slave, and make the money that blackleg De Sormis has cheated me of."

"How do you know he is a cheat and a blackleg?" she asks, trying to speak calmly.

"How do I know?" he repeats, a cruel smile curving his lips, a cruel light in his dark eyes; "because I have been to the miserable garret in the Rue Lor, where he lived—because I have seen the nakedness of the land, and because all his creditors were gathered, like carrion crows, around his body now that he is dead."

"Dead?" ejaculates Addrienne, in horrified surprise.

"Yes, dead; Raoul de Sormis died of heart disease two days ago, and was buried this morning in a pauper's grave."

"And you knew this, and did not tell me—did not let me go to see him?" shrieks the girl, wildly.

"No, certainly not. I exercised my right as a husband, and kept from you what I did not wish you to—"

"Oh, fiend! monster! wretch!" she wails; "what cruelty, what—"

"Here, stop that," he says, sullenly. "I'm the husband, you're only the wife. I'll teach you obedience and respect," and, lifting his hand, he strikes her a heavy blow on the mouth.

Addrienne drops like one bereft of life and lies prone along the carpetless floor, while the brutal man who has dealt the blow, without casting one look at her, leaves the room, and turns the key on her.

The clocks in Paris are booming out twelve

when consciousness returns to De Sormis's unfortunate child. At first she is bewildered and dazed; then suddenly she remembers, and a flood of tears gives some relief to her aching brain.

She feels hopeless, weary; only one thing is clear and distinct to her in her spathy of misery, and that is that she must get away, fly from the man she calls husband.

She struggles to her feet with an effort, washes the blood from her wounded, swollen lips, gathers together what little money and jewellery she possesses, and with infinite trouble and labour knots the sheets together, and placing the bed firmly on them, prepares to descend to the garden by them. It is a dusk, rainy night. She looks from the window all is dark, silent beneath, and with a short prayer; she steps on the sill, grasps the sheets firmly in her little hands, and slides down them with a rapidity that almost takes away her breath and her senses.

A few moments she rests in the quiet garden, then crossing the lawn she gently opens the gate, and flies away swiftly through the streets of Paris, hardly conscious of anything save that she is free.

CHAPTER I.

It is autumn at Marindin. The woods around the old house are splendid with the gold of fast-fading bracken, the coral red of hips and haws. The grand old trees are painted with gorgeous tints. The leaves of the sycamore are splashed with black, the hazel is yellow, the shumac has donned a scarlet robe, the beeches are bright, chestnut colour, the deep-hued creeper clings and climbs over the outhouses, and the Royal and its surroundings seem to be looking their best as though in honour of the coming of their master, Earl Marindin, who after nearly ten years wandering 'neath Eastern skies, has at last decided to return once more to the ancient home of his forefathers.

Marindin Royal is a grand old castle of the Tudor period, built of dark grey stone, its battlemented walls softened by the ivy and lichen which have crept over its bare, stony face, its castellated turrets, and time-worn donjon, almost concealing with their thick growth the narrow loopholes and the scutcheon on the barbican, with the family arms, a lion salient, holding a drawn sword, with the legend underneath, "Honour Before All," in great gold letters. There is a noble entrance, and a huge, square hall, oak-pannelled, and hung with flags and trophies dating from the Middle Ages, out of which open many doors, leading down endless corridors to suite after suite of rooms, with mullioned casements and deep-set windows, broken here and there by an oriel projecting out, supported by a corbel or bracket.

It is a vast place, and there is a certain amount of mediæval dulness within its stone walls that no modern taste or innovation can entirely do away with in the larger rooms and the dim, low-ceiled passages; but in the west-wing are some smaller apartments, which have been used daily for the last hundred years by the Marindins when staying at the castle, and they lack nothing of charm and coaisness.

In one of these cosy rooms two ladies are sitting this bright September day, looking out at the garden arranged somewhat in the Dutch style, with a quaint loveliness which makes it easy to picture its broad alleys and rose-bordered walks peopled by beauties in saque and hoops, with patched and be-painted faces, squired by gentlemen in ruffles, full-skirted coats and powdered hair.

It is a delightful little cabinet, with its cedar-wood ceiling, and gold-decked panels painted with flowers and figures, in the Watteau style, its hangings of satin, its soft luxurious rugs and the dainty nick-nacks strewn about in a careless, graceful fashion. One of its occupants, however, seems to find little pleasure in contemplating her surroundings.

Reclining on a sofa, staring moodily at the home park and the stretch of woods beyond, lies the Lady Silver Diamond.

She is vexed and sullen, and it shows in every curve and line of her haughty, high-bred face.

"Shall we have some tea, mother?" she asks at last, turning her cold blue eyes on the dignified, white-haired lady sitting near, employed on some delicate piece of fancy work.

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"Well, I don't particularly 'wish it,' only it will pass some of these dreary minutes that go so slowly. Each one seems like an hour."

"I don't know why they should seem to go so slowly, to you, Silver," replies the Duchess of Palliser, rather sharply. "We have only been here three weeks; and surely you have everything you can possibly want, and more than you are accustomed to in your own home?"

"Three weeks!" retorts her daughter, yawning; "it seems like three months, or three years."

"Nonsense! It is simply because you have not a string of men at your beck and call that you consider it dull."

"Tea," she adds shortly, to the magnificent creature with powdered head and pink legs, who answers the sharp 'ping' of the jewelled bell she had touched.

"That may be so. I should certainly like a few to enliven me and this old dungeon."

"Old dungeon, Silver! How can you speak in such terms of one of the finest historic places in England?"

"Historic rubbish!" mutters the young lady.

"The dearest wish of my heart is to see you mistress of it," continues the Duchess.

"You and your cousin were much together as children; perhaps his fondness for his old playmate will revive. He may ask you to be his wife."

"You forget mother, that I am five years his senior, and a man of thirty is not very likely to care for a woman older than himself, and one, moreover, whom he knows well has been offered in every matrimonial market in Europe, and failed to find a purchaser."

"And whose fault is that? When you were first presented you had offers enough, good ones too, only your pride and vanity was a stumbling block in the way. You can't expect after being for nearly twenty years before the fashionable world as a marriageable woman that men will run after you and make as much of you as they did when you first appeared."

"No, I don't expect it," replies Lady Silver bitterly, as she rises and goes over to the tea-table. "I've lost my chances, and suppose I shall never have another offer now."

"I don't see why you shouldn't. You have worn well, wonderfully well, for a fair woman; and if you would only lay aside that insufferable pride you may yet make a brilliant, successful match."

"Perhaps; I doubt it, though I agree with you that I have worn well," and she raises her eyes and studies her reflection in a Venetian mirror hanging opposite.

It is a handsome face, aristocratic and refined to the last degree, but cold and expressionless, wanting in colour, too. The air is light and silky, the eyes blue and well placed, the complexion fair almost to a fault, the head poised gracefully on the slim throat, the figure fine and fully developed. She is beautifully dressed in pale azure, with pink coral ornaments, and is a striking specimen of womanhood, yet she lacks softness, and repels more than she attracts.

"There is the Duke of Paulton," continues her mother; "he is still all devotion."

"Yes; a hairless sexagenarian, old enough to be my grandfather."

"Still, very young and handsome to meet women when stood on his money-bags at Paulton Chase."

"To most women, perhaps; not to me. I should only take him as a last resource."

"You are too hard to please, and will die an old maid."

"Perhaps so," and setting down her crown Derby teacup Lady Silver goes back to her sofa, and pulls the silky ears of her spaniel.

Outwardly she is calm; her breeding is too good to allow any of the gall-like bitterness of her soul to appear. A vain, proud woman, who has missed her opportunity, whose heart and soul are bound up in self; who loves rich dresses, costly jewels, and all the good things money alone can procure; and who is obliged to think and plan and contrive to make the grand appearance which is demanded of her as a duke's daughter, because her only brother, the Marquis of Vereton, has lived too fast; kept hunters and racers and yachts, an hotel in Paris, a shooting-box in the Highlands, a fishing-ledge in Norway, and leased a theatre, like any enterprising showman instead of a descendant of the brave Palliser, who came over with Norman William, and for his gallantry in the Conqueror's services was raised to a peerage and given a great tract of land in fair Devonshire, and which said enterprise has nearly ruined the Duke, his father, who has quite an old-fashioned sense of honour, and actually thinks a man *ought* to pay his debts, just or otherwise.

Lady Silver feels little love for the brother whose reckless extravagance has plunged them so deeply in debt, from which the most rigid economy will hardly ever free them; and who has robbed their ancient name of its untarnished lustre, their mode of life of its former glory. She loves wealth, magnificence, all the pomp and ceremony those born in the purple are accustomed to, and hates the economy they are obliged to practise, which reduces her to wearing turned dresses, cleaned gloves and last year's mantles. It is only the tact and skill of her French maid, who is a perfect treasure, that keeps her from falling back into the ranks of ill-dressed dowdy women.

"What a fool I have been," she murmurs to herself, her eyes wandering round the exquisite little room. "To think that I might have been mistress of such a place as this, and just from pride lost the chance. Laurence Vere loved me, and I should have been better off as a rich baronet's wife than as a poor duke's daughter. For the future I will be wiser, and trample on my pride."

"Do you see anything of Noel?" asks the Duchess, after a pause.

"No, mother, nothing. I begin to think that after all he does not intend to come to-day. We shall have to wait here another three weeks in dreary solitude to welcome him home after his long absence."

"Hardly so long as that. He must come within the next two or three days, as he has asked several friends here for the shooting."

"Well, I hope he will, and the friends as well. This place is a perfect Sleepy Hollow."

"I hope you won't make any remarks of this sort before Noel."

"Of course not."

"I should like to see you mistress of it."

"I have not the slightest chance, mother."

"I don't know that. He used to be very fond of you, and if—"

"Here he comes," breaks in Lady Silver, as a phaeton, drawn by a pair of high-stepping greys, dashes by the window, and draws up at the entrance.

"Remember, now, pray remember," cried the Duchess, warningly, "no display of pride or temper."

"Hush! mother, hush!" she whispers, apprehensively, as the door swings open, and Noel Tenterville, Earl Marindin, enters.

"Aunt, this is really most kind," he says, bending his tall head to kiss her cheek. "Your presence here makes it really a home-coming for me."

"My dear boy," she answers, affectionately, "I am only too glad to be among the first to welcome you back to your home and England."

"Thanks, thanks! And Silver? Have you no welcome for your old playmate?"

"A very warm one," answers his cousin, coming forward with a graceful gesture, and resting her white hands for a moment on his shoulders, while he salutes her. "I am overjoyed to see you."

Which is quite true, for though she feels she will have little chance of becoming his wife, yet she knows that he is generosity itself, and that many a handsome dress and costly set of jewels will be presented to her by her rich relative, if she is only commonly civil.

"And I to see you, dear."

"A good beginning," thinks the Duchess to herself.

"Of course you will take some tea, Noel?" she adds aloud.

"Yes thanks. After spending the last year in America, I have, of course, become an inveterate tea-drinker," he replies, as he takes the dainty little cup from her hands.

"You are looking very well, Silver," he goes on. "Time seems to stand still with you."

"Do you think so?" she queries with a light laugh; "I wish it did."

"You will make sad havoc among my gentlemen friends who are coming to slaughter the partridges."

"By the way, aunt, Olisold, and Sir Duncan Penrith come to-morrow. Will it be any inconvenience, or is everything ready?"

"It will be no inconvenience," answers the Duchess, graciously. "Your housekeeper, under my direction, a month ago filled up all the vacancies in your household, and for the last three weeks, as you know, we have been expecting you from day to day. Everything is ready for the reception of your friends."

"I don't know how to thank you for all the trouble you have taken."

"It was no trouble. I am always pleased to do anything I can for you."

Which is the fact, for the simple reason that when engaged in superintending the management of his affairs, she can live rent-free at Marindin Royal or in his spacious house in Eaton-square, which suits her exactly, because Vereton Chase and Palliser Mansion are both let to rich commoners, who pay liberal rents for them.

"It is very good of you. I hope you have not felt dull here, all alone?"

"Not at all. But of course we are very glad to see you and have your society. We quite thought you were coming back last year. What made you stay so long in America?"

"Oh, I don't know exactly," he replies lightly. "I liked the place. It seemed so open, so clean and wholesome after the eastern cities I had spent so much time in."

He did not tell his aunt that it was a beautiful face with a pair of soft pleading brown eyes, seen but once, that had kept him in the States for nearly a year—a year which had been spent in searching for the owner of the said face, trying to find out who she was, where she had come from, and, what was more important, where she had gone to.

He had heard her sing at a third-rate afternoon concert in Chicago, and was struck with the depth and roundness of her voice, and the uncommon loveliness of her fair face, shaded by a great black-plumed velvet hat. He had made inquiries, but failed to find out anything about her. On the programme she was put down as Miss Marian Ormond. Fruitlessly he searched, day after day, for some trace of the woman whose beauty had impressed him so strongly. He travelled the length and breadth of the United States, hoping to see her once again; but at last, after the lapse of a year spent in aimless wanderings, he gave it up in despair and returned to England, feeling that no other woman would ever interest him again, or be to him as dear as was the mere memory of a lovely face, seen only once, and never to be forgotten.

The Duchess is satisfied with his explanation. Lady Silver, watching him closely, sees the sudden cloud that rests on his face, the

faraway look in his eyes, and thinks to herself "there is a woman in the case."

CHAPTER II.

The autumn passes rapidly at Marindin Royal, and Christmas is at hand. The park is covered with a thick pall; the snow lies in great drifts in the hollows, the lake is frozen hard, and the turrets of the old castle are tipped with powdery white, like down.

There are gay doings in Noel Tenterville's halls. The Duke and Duchess of Palliser and Lady Silver Desmond have remained with him, and fancy dress balls, skating by torchlight, amateur theatricals, concerts, and riding parties are the order of the day, to say nothing of the feast given to his tenantry in the great oak-panelled, trophy-decked hall, which the clothopper lads and lasses seem to enjoy immensely.

All the gaiety, all the fun and merriment is lost on Lord Noel. His mind is full of but one memory; and constantly when with his grand friends at ball or concert or rout, the whole scene would seem to fade from before him, and he would hear again a sweet voice singing—

"Will you come back to me, Douglas! Douglas!

In the old likeness that I knew?

I would be so faithful, so loving, Douglas,

Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!"

see again a fair face, with its wistful brown eyes, and scarlet mobile lips.

He is glad when New Year's Day is over and most of his guests depart, including his aunt, uncle, and cousin, who have borrowed his Eaton-square house for a few weeks. Their departure leaves him free to go up to the North, to his friend Captain Olisold's shooting-box. It suits his frame of mind, the wild scenery, the solitude of moor and tarn. He walks for miles till he comes to the sea, or gallops his horse along the smooth strand, watching the toss of the surf on the shore, and the sand-pipers, ring-plover, and gay-plumaged mallow sweep by.

"You find it dull here, Marindin, I am afraid," says his host one night, when they have returned after a long day on the moorlands, the result of which is a 'big bag' and even a hen-harrier, brought down by Olisold's unerring aim. "This is at best but a ramshackle jogg." "

"I don't find it at all dull," responds his guest quickly. "I had rather too much gaiety this winter at Marindin."

"Yes, I can imagine so. The Duchess and Lady Silver must be slightly overpowering. Take care you are not caught."

"No fear of that."

"Confound it, what luck!" ejaculates the Captain next morning, when his man brings in the letters. "This is from uncle Sir Duncan. Wants me to go to Penrith I suppose. Yes," he continues as he scans the note. "A nice journey this weather from the north to the south."

"Yes, I don't envy you."

"My going needn't interfere with you, Marindin. You can stay here if you wish."

"Thanks," replies the Earl. "If I may I will."

"Of course you may. Old Nan will see to your comfort." And so Marindin remains at the quaint little north country shooting-box while his friend travels right from one end of England to the other.

At first it was all very well, but after a time he begins to find that evenings spent alone are rather dull, and looks about for some amusement.

"How far is it by road to Colthorpe from here?" he asks MacNab, old toothless Nan's better-half.

"Five miles, sir."

"Is there anything going on there?"

"Yes, sir, I see'd a concert were to take place at the Town Hall to-night."

"To-night? I think I shall go. I suppose you can drive me over?"

"Yes, sir, I'll go and harness Jupiter; I'll be slow going over these slippery roads."

A couple of hours later Lord Marindin is seated in the front row in the Town Hall of Colthorpe. He is rather early, and amuses himself watching the provincials and their peculiar fiery. After a time he glances at his programme and the first thing he sees is—"The Kerry Dance"—Miss Marian Ormond. For a moment the blood rushes to his head, the letters dance before his eyes, the lights whirl round all in a mist. Then across the throbbing of his pulses, the chaotic confusion of his brain, fall the notes of a sweet well-remembered voice—

"Oh! the days of the merry dancing,
Oh! the ring of the piper's tune;
Oh! for one of those hours of gladness,
Gone, alas! like our youth, too soon."

And, lifting his eyes, he sees once more the woman whose face had lived in his memory for two years.

Eagerly his eyes drink in her loveliness. He never removes them from her face until the song is finished, and bowing her thanks for the rounds of applause that follow she glides gracefully from the platform. Then he starts up abruptly and goes to seek the manager, a man he has known in Paris and Vienna.

His card sent in by an official quickly brings out Mr. Lewis, who is all smiles and bows to the Earl.

"Lewis," he begins, abruptly, "I want an introduction to Miss Ormond. Is it feasible? Can you manage it?"

"Well, my lord," he replies, hesitatingly, "I don't know. Miss Ormond is somewhat different from the general run of public singers. She is very exclusive, and shows a decided objection to having any gentlemen introduced to her. I don't know if she—"

"Can't you try? Ask if you may introduce me?"

"That would never answer! She would say 'No' at once. It can only be done in this manner: Come with me to the artists' room. I will present you first to some of the others, and afterwards, in a casual, unpremeditated sort of way, to her. Then she will have no idea that you want to know her in particular."

"Yes, that will do very well." And his lordship followed the manager into the rather dreary room, where the members of his company are waiting to appear in turn before an approving or disapproving—as the case may be—audience. He is introduced to the contralto, stout lady of an mountain age, much bearded and powdered; who speaks with a guttural German accent; to the soprano, who is tall and woefully thin, attired in a pink silk gown, which is cut in such a fashion that it liberally displays a pair of scraggy shoulders and a pigeon-breasted neck to the public gaze; to the tenor, Signor Tommaso, and after a time—which appears an age to him—to Marian Ormond. He talks commonplace at first, looking at her furtively, not to give her the impression that she is the sole object of his visit to the green-room; but he finds it hard not to study her. She appears more lovely in the eyes of the infatuated young man, with her magnificent fair hair uncoiled, her soft brown eyes wistful as those of a hunted stag, shadowed by that or smudged, dancing through their long black lashes; her rounded, thin shape shown to perfection in its clinging robe of pale blue; a great bunch of purple-black poodles, fastened with graceful negligence, under her dimpled chin, hanging out the clear tints of the exquisite complexion.

It is such an uncommon, sweet face, he thinks; so winning, so fascinating, with its ever-varying expression of mingled mockery and melancholy that gives such a provoking charm, such a piquant look, to the clear-cut features. It is a face to ensnare, bewilder, interest—and it interests Lord Marindin.

"I think I have seen your face to-night?" he ventures at last.

"Indeed? Where?" she asks, with rather a startled look in her eyes.

"At Chicago. Singing at Valmar's concerts."

"Oh, yes. I was there two years ago."

"Did you stay in the States long after that particular concert?"

"No; we returned to England ten days later."

It is the Earl's turn to say, "Indeed!" now, and he says it, and thinks of the year he wasted searching for her in America.

"I see you sing at two more concerts here?"

"Yes. On Saturday and Wednesday."

"I shall hope to have the pleasure of hearing you again."

"You are very kind," she answers.

And then she goes on to the platform again, and he returns to his seat and listens. The song is "Golden Love," and the words seem to him prophetic of their future as they ring out, clear and sweet, through the hall:—

"Never to part, oh, darling! never more!"

The next morning he gallops over to Colthorpe, and, putting up his horse at "The Mermaid," wanders about the town the whole day through, hoping to meet the fair songstress, but he is disappointed, and returns to his friend's little box tired and dispirited. Saturday morning also, though spent by Noel wandering about the narrow, crooked streets of the quaint old town, brings him no reward; but in the evening he is one of the earliest to enter the concert-room.

After Miss Ormond's first song he repairs to the green-room, chatting cordially with these of the company he knows, and approaching her, and when he does he takes courage, from the kind smile that welcomes him, to offer a magnificent red camellia he has in his coat, which is accepted and fastened in the corsage of the sweeping black dress she wears.

He does not leave the room when she sings again, but waits and assists her down the steps when she returns.

"That is your last song to-night?"

"Yes."

"I shall not hear you again until Wednesday?"

"No, I suppose not."

"Not unless your lordship will honour us to-morrow," says Lewis, who is standing near; and, being a shrewd man of the world, guesses how the hand lies, and wishes to conciliate a rich nobleman, whose patronage and support will be an advantage to him. "We are staying at the Queen's Hotel. If you will join our party at dinner to-morrow, three sharp, your lordship knows how flattered and obliged we shall feel."

"Thanks, thanks, Lewis. I shall be most happy," replies Noel at once. "And the obligation, I assure you, will be on my side. It is dull enough at North Port to make me crave for society."

And so fate, in the shape of Lewis, theatrical and professional agent, manager of provincial and continental touring companies, throws Noel Earl Marindin, Viscount Grantley, Baron Testerville, last son of an old and noble family, into close companionship with the woman whose beauty has exercised such a strange fascination over him; of whom he knows nothing, save that she has a lovely face, a sweet voice, and that she sings in public—a mark for the gaze of anyone who cares to pay for the privilege of looking at her.

"It was very good of you to accept the banquet last night."

"It was most kind of you to remember my having said I loved flowers, and send it me."

They stand together, earl and singer, by the singing sea, watching the tons of the snuf on the yellow strand, and the winged dwellers of the shores as they fly swiftly above the wild flowerets and silent moorpoles.

"It was no kindness, simply a pleasure to myself. I should have sent you some before had I thought you would accept them."

Marian Ormond murmurs something, her companion cannot catch what.

"Do you go to Windermere to-morrow? Lewis told me he intends to leave here."

"No, I don't go with them."

"No. You stay here, then?" she says, eagerly. "I shall see you still. I feared these happy days were over for me!"

"I do not remain here," she answers, a little coldly. "I feel I want a rest. I have told Mr. Lewis that I shall not accept any more engagements until May or June."

"You have been working too hard, exerting yourself too much. You ought to go to Italy for a year and idle in the orange groves. You don't look strong," and he casts an anxious glance at the beautiful face, which is somewhat pale.

"My looks are not truthful, then," she answers, lightly. "For I am very strong, never ill. Only I think my voice will benefit by a holiday."

"Of course, and where will you spend it?"

"Really, Lord Marindin," she says, with an embarrassed laugh, "you seem to be quite interested in my movements."

"Yes, I am," he answers, with a significance that brings a bright flush to her cheeks. "Will you tell me?"

"I would rather not, if you will excuse me."

"Why not? Have these last few pleasant days been so little to you, or so disagreeable, that you will not give me the chance of respecting them?"

"Not at all. But—but—" she stammers.

"But what?" he demands.

"I think—we ought not to meet again—that it would be better for you not to see me any more."

"I consider that I am best judge of that."

"Perhaps. Still, I have a right to some voice in the matter."

"Certainly," he answers, stiffly. "Of course, if you don't wish it, and would rather not—"

"You know it is not that," she answers, lifting her great, wistful eyes to his. "It is the difference in our positions, and—"

"That is nothing to me," he breaks in, impatiently. "Miss Ormond—Marian—tell me where you are going? Let me have the happiness of seeing you again. You have my sincerest respect, my deepest admiration. Do not let any false notions of pride separate us, and debar me from the pleasure of your society."

"If what you say be true," she replies, in a low tone, "it ought to make me more firm in refusing to see you."

"It is true that I admire and respect you, but I fail to see why that should drive me away from you. Tell me," he pleads. "Let me see you again."

She looks up at him, a tender light on her face. It is so hard, so terribly hard, to refuse his request, to shut herself out from what would be the greatest joy her life has ever known, to put from her a certain happiness. He looks so handsome and noble standing beside her, a world of pleading in his violet eyes. The sun falls in glittering rays on his golden head; he seems fair, as brave as any Viking that went with gallant King Olaf—

"Sailing, sailing,
Northward into Dronthum fiord."

A throb of exaltation stirs her heart, as she feels his love is, or will be, hers, if she yields to his prayer.

"Tell me," he pleads again, "and something stronger than her sense of honour and right compels her to speak."

"I am going to stay at Moulsey with Mr. Lewis's mother."

"And I may come to see you there?"

"If you really wish it."

"I do wish it more than I wish for anything else on earth."

There is an amount of fervour in the Earl's tone that carries conviction with it, and the beautiful woman, his darling, who is growing

strangely tender towards him, makes one last effort to save him from herself.

"You must not come for a month or six weeks," she repeats, in a dismayed tone.

"Yes; by that time you may have changed your mind, and, perhaps, will not care to call on me. You must promise this," she adds, playfully.

"I promise, of course," he answers, gravely. He had searched for her for two years; he can wait a few weeks, if at the end of that time he is certain to see her once more. "But a month, a year," he goes on, "an eternity can make no difference to me now," and pressing her hands tenderly, as they reach the hotel, he turns and leaves her, with a last lingering look at the lovely face.

CHAPTER III.

UNDER the shade of a purple foliage beseech sits Marian Ormond.

The river ripples along almost at her feet, glinting and sparkling in the sunshine; the birds sing, the drooping trees throw fantastic shadows on the water, the silver-stemmed osiers and graceful reeds wave in the gentle breeze. Countess Violet catches their fragrance on the air and mingle with the starlike primroses; dark is singing blithely, now soaring up, up far into the blue vaults of Heaven, now dropping down to earth. But the song of the bird falls dull on her ear; she does not heed it or the fair spring flowers, or the sunlight coming in ripples of gold over the stream; she is thinking dreamily, a musing faraway look on her face.

It is two months since she parted with Noel Tenterville, and she has neither seen nor heard from him.

"He has forgotten," she murmurs. "It is better so." Yet the pained look deepens in her great eyes, the graceful head droops lower, and Noel, who unseen has crossed the lawn and stands behind her, notes it and her dejected attitude.

"Does she long for me to come to her?" he wonders, and at the sight of her warm, graceful loveliness, which has haunted him from the first moment he saw her, the old, scarce-repressed passion, which has awayed him for over two years, leaps into fresh strength, wakes into new life, and hurries him on—on over the brink. He does not stay to weigh the cost of his actions, to think of the future, of the penalty, of his great name and ancient lineage; he only knows that he loves, only thinks of the woman before him.

"Marian!"

He touches her hand gently as he speaks! She lifts her eyes, and rises tremulously as she meets his.

"You have come—at last?" The words break from her lips almost unconsciously; there is a flush on the delicate cheek, a new light in the great brown eyes that adds to their beauty. The suddenness of his approach has startled and thrown her off her guard. She has meant for his sake to greet him coolly, with the studied politeness society demands from mere acquaintances, and then, then to send him from her, bidding him never return again, and, instead, she is standing before him with outstretched hands and parted lips, the colour coming and going in her fair face. The Earl, as he gazes at her under the shade of the purple beeches, and sees the tremulous, unstudied joy with which she greets him, knows, feels, with a mighty throbbing of exultation, that she loves him.

"Yes, I have come. Did you think I could forget you?"

"I did not know, I could not tell."

"You know now. I struggled to keep away, as you seemed to wish it, but the struggle has been vain. I have come to stay, if you will let me; I can never part from you again."

He bends down closer to the face, whose irresistible loveliness charms him into forgetfulness of all he ought to remember. The

down-drooped lids, the soft flush, the shy tremor, all add to its beauty. "My love! my dearest!" he murmurs. "Mine alone and always."

The great passion he bears her sways him like a reed. He does not count the cost of his actions—does not think of the life-long tie his words entail, as he draws her tenderly into his arms, giving, with the kiss he presses on her lips, his future to the keeping of a woman of whom he knows nothing, bartering the honour of his ancient name, his freedom, his peace, to possess what he loves best on earth. His heart has gone out to her with a passionate longing, and he is determined to gratify that longing, forgetting the motto of his race, "Honour Before All."

"Take my soul to inherit,
To suffer punishment and pain,
So this woman but be mine."

That is all he wants, all he cares for in this moment of supreme rapture.

"Tell me that you love me," he whispers, "that you will be my wife?" And she, lifting her glorious orbs, and looking back love into his, says "Yes," and seals his fate and her own.

One bright May morning, a few weeks later, there is a quiet wedding at the quaint little church of East Moulsey, and surely no Earl of Marindin Royal has ever had such a bridal before. There is no gathering of the great and the grand in the old time-worn structure. Besides the bride and her groom there are only six people present, and three of these are the clergyman, the church beadle, and the antiquated specimen of feminine humanity who cleans the place; the other trio are Mr. Lewis, his mother, and Captain Clissold, who has come to play the part of best man, and who wonders vaguely where he has seen his friend's bride before. That he has seen that pale, beautiful face he feels sure, but where? That is the question he cannot answer.

There is not a shred of bridal gear about Marian. Her dress is of dark grey silk, and her heavily-plumed hat matches it in colour. Lord Marindin has hurried on the wedding, fearful that something may occur to stop it, that some of his relatives may hear of it, and try to rob him of his heart's desire. He does not intend to announce that such a person as Marian Ormond exists until she is his wife, and till no one can come between them or part them save Death.

They kneel before Heaven's altar and plight their vows, the parson gabbles out the marriage service, and these twain are made one flesh.

When the ceremony is over they drive away in Clissold's phaeton, leaving the owner thereof standing in the road by the church porch, bareheaded, and still wondering where he has seen the newly-made Countess of Marindin.

After a month spent in Hampshire the Earl takes his bride to the home of his forefathers.

"It was the time of roses;
We plucked them as we passed,"

And Marian thinks there never were more lovely ones than those that border the walks before the Royal.

It is all so magnificent, so grand—the Home-park, with its graceful deer, its noble views, its picturesque lake; the gardens, brilliant with choice flowers; the vast old Castle—that she feels almost overpowered as she realises, for the first time, something of the wealth, power, and position of the man who, blindly trusting her, asking to know nothing of what has gone before in her life, has made her his wife and a peeress, raised her to the rank of the highest in the land.

A flush rises to her cheek as she alights from the carriage and passes, on her husband's arm, through the lines of servants drawn up in the great hall, where battered morions and dented breastplates, notched rapiers and jewelled daggers, hang on the walls above the

grim figures clothed in armour, from the time of the first Tudor, armour which has been worn by the ancestors of her husband.

"This is to be your morning-room, my dearest," he says, as he conducts her to the Watteau cabinet, "I hope you will like it and find it cheerful."

"It is exquisite, Noel!" she replies, delightedly. "I shall pass most of my time here," and she looks round at the lovely paintings and dainty hangings with admiring eyes.

"In that case I shall spend several hours here also, every day," he says, with a fond smile, that shows he is still a lover.

"Take me to the portrait-gallery," she says, later on in the evening, after dinner, "I want to see all your people that have gone before."

"Come then," he answers, smiling, "the light is still good," and together they go up the broad, deep oak stairs to the gallery above, which runs the whole length of the west wing. It is one of the noblest rooms in the castle; with its lofty frescoed ceiling, its dark panels, its many peaked oriel windows, its smooth, polished floor, and rare family portraits.

The evening sun is streaming in, lighting up the pictures; and making a sort of halo round Noel's head with its red rays. The Earl paces slowly down the long room, pointing out each celebrity; and Marian, as she looks at him, thinks how strongly he resembles the pictured faces of his dead and bygone ancestors. The yellow hair, violet eyes, and, above all, the genial, sunny expression seems to be inherited by each and everyone of them. It is there in the portrait of Richard, fourth Earl of Marindin, who fought with Edward the Black Prince at Cressy and Poitiers; now it is on the lips of Guy, depicted in thick hose and huge ruff, a favourite of good Queen Bess; now brightening the handsome face of another Noel, a gay cavalier of Charles the Second's time; now softening and redeeming the somewhat stern visage of a staunch follower of James II.; again under the powdered hair of William and Mary's era; in the beautiful faces of the women of the race, whether dressed in flowing Tudor robes, stiff stomacher of Scotch James's time, or the rich brocades favoured by Anne.

"Who is this beautiful Spanish-looking woman in the Elizabethan ruff?" queries the new Countess, stopping before a full length portrait.

"That is Mercedes. She was the wife of a gallant of Queen Mary's Court, and was high in favour both with the Queen and her husband, Philip; and, strange to say, with her sister also, when she succeeded to the throne. You see," he goes on, "that nearly all the Marindins marry dark women, and yet the sons born to them are invariably fair."

"How strange!" says Marian.

"Who is that?" she asks, suddenly, pointing at a miniature of a very beautiful and extremely fair woman, with powdered hair and patched face. "A daughter of the house, I suppose, as you all marry dark women."

"No," replies the Earl, "she was the wife of another Noel, who was one of the brightest of Queen Anne's Court, and a very bad woman. She was a disgrace to us, the only blot on our stainless scutcheon. Her portrait hung in that space opposite my mother's, the last Countess, but I had it removed. I did not wish the portrait of such as she to hang amid the stainless virtuous women of my race."

"I shall take down this miniature," he goes on, unhooking it from the wall, "and your portrait, my love, shall take the place left vacant by the removal of wicked Madam Dorothy's."

"Find me another spot, Noel; don't put me there!"

His wife's voice sounds strange and far away. He turns and looks at her; she is very pale, and her eyes have a strained, wild pain in them.

"What is the matter, Marian?" he cries.

"Nothing," she answers, pressing her hand

to her side. "Nothing; only, perhaps, I think I am a little tired."

"My dearest, how selfish of me not to think of your fatigue. You must be quite worn out after your journey; I must insist on your going to your room at once," and he leads her out into the great corridor, across to the suite of apartments he has had prepared for her, hung with the palest blue satin and silver, which suits her blonde fairness so well. The windows look out on the chase, and a sweep of wild woodland, beyond which is the sea.

"What a beautiful view! I shall never get tired of looking at it."

"I hope not, my love; as the best part of your life will be spent here it would be rather awkward if you did; though, of course, I can purchase a place elsewhere, if you prefer to live in a more modern establishment."

"No, no, my husband," she answers, with somewhat uncanny fervour, clinging to him fondly. "I never want to leave your home—my home now. I should like to live here always—always, and never leave it. Alone with you, only you."

"That would be very pleasant," he answers, lightly, "but quite impossible. We both have duties and obligations to society, which we must fulfil. Besides, I want the world to see my wife, to admire my choice," he goes on, with fond pride. "However much I may wish to keep you all to myself, I feel that I cannot do so. I must take you into society, introduce you to my friends and relatives, and entertain here. My old place has too long been given over to solitude and silence; I look to you to revive its former glories and gay hospitalities; to give better dinners and more enjoyable dances than anyone else in the county, even her Grace of Elmhirst, who is celebrated for her tact and charm as a hostess."

"Noel, must we go into society, live here—entertain?" falters his wife.

"My dearest, what a question to ask," he answers, turning his eyes, full of surprised wonder, on her; "of course we must."

"Your friends, your relatives, I almost dread meeting them. They will look down on the woman you have chosen to raise to your high estate, and all my deathless love for you will be as nothing in their eyes."

"Do not distress yourself about that, Marian; it is enough that I have chosen you. No one will dare to look down upon my wife."

The pride of a blue-blooded old race shows in his haughty tone, and the lifting of his handsome head, as though he would say, "who shall dare to criticise my actions, the actions of Noel Tenterville, Earl of Marindin."

"You are sweet, and pure and true, as any titled dame who has married into my family. I have trusted you with my name and my honour, and I know its lustre will never be tarnished, eh, love?"

The woman leaning on his breast shivers a little, but murmurs "no," and clings closer to him.

"Now," he continues, "I must leave you. You are tired out and want a long sleep. I shall go and write to my aunt, the Duchess of Palliser, to come here as soon as possible, with her daughter, Lady Silver Ormond, and stay with us, and to a few other friends, who will come and make this old castle more cheerful for you. And, Marian, you will try and love my aunt for my sake, will you not? She is a charming woman; I am sure you will like each other."

"Yes, dear Noel, I will, for your sake first, and hers afterwards, if she will let me."

"That is right; *au revoir*," and kissing her white brow he leaves the room, and goes to write the letter which is to announce to the duchess the fact that her nephew, with his vast rent-roll, and many titles, has married a woman who is—nobody knows who or what exactly.

CHAPTER IV.

"Good heavens! How disgraceful!" exclaimed her Grace of Palliser.

"What is disgraceful, mother?" asks Lady Silver, languidly, looking across the breakfast table at Eaton-square.

"Your cousin, Tenterville," replies the elder lady, flourishing the letter she is reading in the air.

"What of him?"

"What of him? Why he is married."

"Married!" Lady Silver's lips trembled somewhat, and her pale face grows a shade paler.

"Yes! Has been married a whole month."

"To whom?"

"A lady not quite in our rank of life," replies the Duchess, referring to the letter and speaking with a sneer. "A Miss Ormond. Never heard of her, did you?"

"No, she can't be in our set."

"Of course not. It is a mis-alliance evidently, because he wants us to go down to Marindin as soon as possible, and be introduced to her, and 'do all we can for his wife.' She is some nameless horror," goes on her Grace distractedly, "as somebody once said in a book, 'a *chanteuse danseuse*, or something worse.' It is scandalous, shameful, and I thought you would be mistress there."

"I told you I had not the smallest chance."

"You might have had but for this designing woman, who has entrapped him. However, I won't go down to the Royal; I won't give her the support of my presence, and the benefit of my power in the fashionable world."

"Yes you will, mother," says Lady Silver, who has been perusing her cousin's letter very quietly. "You mustn't forget that this house in which we live is his, the horses we drive the carriages we use his also, and that for his assistance and help we should have to disappear bodily from the 'fashionable world.' You take in plain sewing, and I go out as a governess, or a clerk, or something horrible."

"I don't forget it," with a groan.

"Then, of course you must see the folly of offending him. We must go down to Marindin, and appear to receive her with open arms and be friendly. We can watch her closely, and if we find a weak place in her armour, to speak figuratively, slay her without mercy, if she behaves badly—and those sort of half-bred people are always wild—he may divorce her."

"Yes, perhaps so," agrees her Grace, brightening perceptibly, "and then there will be another chance for you."

"He wants us to be there by the middle of July," goes on Silver, disregarding the latter part of her mother's speech. "That will do very well. Another fortnight and everything will be over in town. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, I think so. And now we had better go and consult Marie about our dresses. We must impress this creature Noel has brought into the family with our magnificence."

And the two ladies go to consult the French maid, who is such a treasure in the way of converting old gowns into new ones.

The ordeal is over. Marian has been presented to the Duchess of Palliser, has been embraced by her, and has also received a stony salute from Lady Silver, who has eyed her all over, but fails to find the smallest flaw in her perfect beauty, or her easy graceful manners.

It is the evening after their arrival. They sit at dinner in the banquetting-hall, all hung with purple velvet, on which, embroidered with gold threads, are the lions salient of the house of Tenterville, with here and there a rare picture, a Van Föl, a Greuz, a couple of Vanderfeldes, and a Rembrandt. Hundreds of rose-coloured wax lights shed their radiance around, lighting up the massive oak side-board, with its rich garniture of gold plate and delicate Venetian glass, gleaming on gay dresses and lovely faces, but not on one lovelier than the face of the hostess, who sits at the top of the long table with an ease and *hauteur* as though to the manner born.

She is rather pale, and the huge blood-red rubies, old family jewels, which she wears

round her throat and arms and in her hair, add to the pallor; but, beyond that, there is not the slightest outward sign of the extreme nervousness which possesses her, and the Earl is pleased with and proud of the beautiful woman he has made his own.

"Your wife is quite a beauty," says her Grace of Elmhirst when dinner is over, and they are in the great drawing-room, all gold and white satin. "She will make quite a sensation next season. It is such an uncommon style. You must bring her over to the Hirst soon."

"Thanks," replies Lord Marindin, greatly gratified by the openly-expressed admiration of this celebrated leader of fashion and *ton*. "I shall be most pleased to do so."

"Who was your cousin's wife?" asks the great lady of Silver, later on, when Marian, yielding to her husband's wishes, consents reluctantly to sing.

"Well—really—I—don't exactly know," she replies in a hesitating way, which is meant and which succeeds in arousing her Grace's curiosity and doubts. "She was a Miss Ormond. He told us that, but—very little besides. You know what men are," she goes on, with a little significant shrug of her shoulders; "they see a pretty face, fall in love with it, and—marry it, no matter what is in the background."

"Ah! and so you think your cousin has been foolish enough to do that?"

"Well, really, I can't say. As I told your Grace, for the simple reason that I don't know."

"Ah!" ejaculates the Duchess of Elmhirst again, gathering her laces round her, sitting up very straight in her chair, and beginning to wish devoutly that she had not invited Lord Marindin to bring his wife to the Hirst.

"You are not entirely English, are you?" asks Lady Silver, a few days later, as she and Marian sit together in the Watteau cabinet, occupied with some filmy lace work.

"My mother was English," replies the Countess briefly.

"And your father?"

"He was half Norwegian," still more briefly.

"And I wonder what the other half was," muses Lady Silver, watching her cousin's wife through her half-closed lids. "You've got a secret, my lady, and I'll do my best to find it out, though you play your part very well, and don't let much appear on the surface."

"You sing remarkably well," she goes on, still watching intently the beautiful face of the *châtelaine* of Marindin.

"Do you think so?"

"Yes. You have a grand voice, and it has been well cultivated. You sing with all the ease and finish one generally meets with only in professional singers," concludes the Duke's daughter, darily.

She speaks somewhat at random, but the arrows goes straight home. Marian's cheek flushes, and though she manages to murmur some words of thanks for the rather doubtful compliment she feels fearfully embarrassed, for it dawns upon her that the Earl has not told his relatives what she has been, and she feels instinctively that Lady Silver is her enemy, grudges and envies her the position to which she has been raised, and will watch her closely, to discover, if she can, all the events of her past life.

"Captain Olisold fancied he saw you in —"

"Marian," breaks in Lord Marindin's voice, as he enters the little cabinet; "I want you to go down to the village and play the Lady Bountiful to some of my poor people, and call at the Vicarage. Old Palmer is a bit of an anchorite, and shuts himself up with mummies, aged eleven thousand years, ancient coins, antique furniture, and art treasures of all sorts, and neglects somewhat his daughter, a charming girl of about sixteen, whose acquaintance I should like you to cultivate, as I am sure you will find her a

congenial companion. Can you go now, my love?"

"Yes, certainly," says the Countess, rising with alacrity, glad of anything that will put an end to her cross-questioning.

"Will you accompany me, Lady Silver?" She feels that politeness demands she shall ask the cold-eyed woman she is beginning to fear to go with her, and hopes she will refuse, but her hopes are doomed to disappointment.

"I shall be very pleased to call at the Vicarage with you," she replies, "and renew my acquaintance with the Vicar;" and so they set off together and visit the model cottages in the village and give money to some, and promise flannel to the rheumatic old people, and wine and strengthening broth to the ailing young ones; and then they go on to the Vicarage—a quaint house, almost entirely overgrown, in front, by the close foliage of a Cotoneaster, surrounded by firs and elms and oaks, alder trees, which entertain a colony of noisy rooks, whose wrangling wake the echoes of the otherwise silent place.

A motherly person, whose rubicund, smiling visage is surrounded by a cap frill which has all the appearance of an Elizabethan ruff, answers the deep clang of the bell, and shows the ladies into a long room, with heavily-beamed ceiling, and old-fashioned deeply-sunk windows, and richly-carved, high-backed chairs.

"Master will be proud and honoured to see you, my lady," says the elderly handmaiden, bobbing and curtsying before Marian.

"And I hope your young mistress is at home, and that I shall see her as well," says the Countess, remembering her husband's instructions, and determined to try and please him to the utmost of her ability.

"Yes, my lady," and with another bob, and flourish of her huge cap-trills, the old woman disappears, and shortly the door opens and admits the Vicar, a placid, mild old man, with silvery white hair, a beard like the Patriarch's, and a sweet, low voice, and his daughter, a young, dark-eyed girl, with a pretty, innocent face, to whom Lady Marindin at once takes a great fancy, and chats away gaily to, while Lady Silver talks to Mr. Palmer.

"You must come and stay with me at the Royal," says Marian after a while, when they rise to leave, "if your father can spare you, and make a long stay."

"Thank you, Lady Marindin," he replies. "I shall be more than glad for my little girl to stay with you. This is but a dull place for youth to flourish in, and I fear my thoughts are so much in the past that I am poor company for Ada."

"Then I shall expect you to come the day after to-morrow."

"Thank you, my lady," answers the young girl, timidly. "I shall be very glad to come!"

And then they take their leave, declining the mead which is offered them in quaint little tumblers, of like antiquity with the rest of the establishment, and the biscuits, which look as though they had come out of the ark, and go slowly back towards the Royal. In the Chase they meet a crowd of gamekeepers and men half-carrying something.

"What is it? Has anything happened?" asks Lady Silver in her imperious way.

"Yes, my lady," says the gamekeeper, touching his cap. "There's bin some poacher arter the young birds, and we caught one o' the chaps, and in the tussle he's got a bit o' a knock on the head. We're takin' him down to the village to be plastered and spunged, and then to the lock-up. The audacity o' the warmint," he concludes, angrily, "to dare prowl about, in broad daylight," and in his just indignation, he shakes the more than half-insensible wretch, who is firmly held on either side by his subordinates, and discloses his face with its intensely black moustaches, and thick dark hair, matted and clotted with blood.

As Lady Marindin's eyes rest for the space of an instant on the pallid face an exclamation of horror bursts from her lips, and

clutching her companion's arm she drags her forward, exclaiming,—

"Oh merciful heavens, how horrible!" "What is the matter?" asks the other, coolly. "Have not you courage enough to look at a little blood, and a man's battered head?"

"Yes! No—no!" murmurs Marian, incoherently. "That face!"

"Well, what about it? Has been rather a handsome one, I should say—looks like a foreigner."

"Do you think so?" she asked, nervously.

"Yes; but what was there about it to frighten you?"

"Nothing. Only—only—" falters Marian, off her guard, "I fancied—he was like some one—I need to know—long ago."

"Oh, indeed!" remarks Lady Silver, with so much emphasis that the Countess sees she has made a mistake, and played into the hands of her enemy. "A lover, I suppose, come to seek charity now that you are mistress of a vast fortune. Take care, though," she goes on with a sneering laugh, "Noel doesn't like his preserves poached on."

But the Countess answers never a word, only stifles the groan that rises to her white lips, and hurries on through the calm sweetness of the summer's eve, and when she reaches the Castle goes in by a side entrance straight to her own room, and flinging herself on the lace-trimmed satin coverlet of her bed, buries her face in the pillow, moaning,—

"Can it be? Was it only a chance likeness, or can the dead come to life? Is the only joy my dreary existence has (ever known over already. Must I leave the husband who is dearer to me than life? Oh, Heaven, pity me, spare me that!" and bursting into fresh sobs the Countess wrings her hands, and worn out by the violence of her emotions, after a time sinks into a sort of apathy, from which she is aroused by the voice of her maid, asking if my lady will dress for dinner.

"I am too ill, Marie, to appear to-night. Will you tell my lord so, and ask him to excuse me, and bring me a cup of strong tea? The heat, I think, has overpowered me."

"Yes, my lady," replies the discreet Frenchwoman, gliding away to do her bidding.

"Marian seems quite overcome," observes the Earl to Lady Silver, after dinner. "I suppose the walk to the village was too much for her."

"Yes," assents his cousin, with veiled spite, "or the sight of the handsome poacher's battered head."

"Ah, did you meet him as he was being taken to gaol? Poor darling, she did not tell me that! It was quite enough to upset her," and without waiting to hear more he moves away among his guests, followed by the gaze of a pair of cold eyes.

"Fool, fool! poor, infatuated fool!" mutters the possessor of them. "Be happy while you may, for I think you have married a woman who will be a blot on your scutcheon;" and following the Earl's example, she goes among the guests, and with innuendoes, shrugs of her shoulders, and half-finished sentences conveys to most of them the impression that there is some mystery at the back of Lady Marindin's sudden indisposition connected with her past life, which is not as reputable as it might be.

CHAPTER V.

"Ah me! the golden time;

But its hours have passed away.

And the beauty and the joyance of the early days o'er."

SUMMER is long over, the chill November winds sweep around the Royal, whirling the dead leaves high in the air. The sun is struggling through the mists of autumn, trying to brighten with his rays the sodden landscape on which the Countess gazes, with eyes that are somewhat sad.

The Earl and Lady Silver, who is a splendid horsewoman, have ridden to the meet, and

Marian is alone with little Ada Palmer, who, truth to tell, has been her chief companion during the last few months, for Silver's seeds of defamation have taken root, and the county people are a little shy of mixing much or being very intimate with the new mistress of Marindin Royal, who is, as her detractor is wont to say, with a shrug of her silk-clad shoulders, "nobody knows who."

They will come to great gatherings at the Castle, but led by her Grace of Elmhirst, they decline close and intimate acquaintance with Marian. Lord Marindin has not noticed this, having been engrossed with schemes for the improvement of his long-neglected lands, his shooting, hunting and riding, and as is always the case, has not heard a single word of the scandal circulated about the woman than whom none is nearer or dearer to him in the whole world; and Mr. Palmer, buried among his curios, has heard no word against the fair fame of one with whom his daughter associates so much.

"What shall we do this afternoon, little one, to amuse ourselves?" asks the Countess, moving away from the window. "It is not pleasant for a walk."

"Whatever you wish," replies the Vicar's little daughter.

"No. Whatever you wish," with a smile. "You are to choose."

"Well, I should like to go through the uninhabited rooms in the east wing, if your ladyship will let me."

"To search for a ghost?" asks her ladyship. "Well, we will go and see what is to be seen," and getting the keys from the housekeeper they go off through the long, low-ceiled passages that lead from one wing to the other, and climb up flights of stone stairs till they come to a suite of great rooms at the top of the castle opening out of each other.

Vast, ghostly, echoing places. Most of them empty, dim, gloomy and gruesome. A few have wooden presses arranged round the walls, and Ada, with the eager curiosity of youth, at once tries the keys, and finding some that fit, unlocks them with difficulty and rummages the contents.

They are mostly rich clothes, that have belonged to dead and bygone Tentervilles. There are quaint sacques, brocaded satins, sweeping court trains, knee-breeches, rich gold-laced velvet coats, such as Claude du Val and the gentry of his profession are generally depicted in; white perukes, costly ruffles, ancient broad-toed shoes with huge flaps and glittering buckles, slender rapiers, with flexible highly-polished blades, and daggers with jewelled handles, mere toys, yet dangerous death-dealing toys.

Strewn about here and there are old Chipendale chairs, armless, legless, and sadly dilapidated; ebony cabinets, damaged and worm eaten; faded tapestries, cracked bits of rare china, a big sofa, stiff and uncomfortable, clearly of the Queen Anne period; numerous spidery-legged little tables of any and every period, and some richly carved linen coffers or chests.

On one of these Marian seats herself and watches her little friend as she tosses over the costly relics of the past.

"Oh, look, Lady Marindin, isn't this exquisite?" she cries suddenly, holding up a white satin sacque, hand-embroidered, with pale blue forget-me-nots, and trimmed with rare point.

"Yes, that is lovely!" and the Countess takes it, and looks at it closely, feeling vaguely that she has seen it before.

"And look, here are the ornaments to wear with it; turquoise set in Indian gold, and the fan, white feathers, with jewelled handle;" and Ada displays her treasures, and after depositing them on the ugly Queen Anne sofa turns again and plunges her hands into the press, bringing out a quaint round box, which she opens. "Here is the hair powder, the rouge and the patches, everything complete. Oh! Lady Marindin, do put it on."

"Why don't you, Ada?"

"I am too small and dark. It will suit you

beautifully, being fair. Do let me dress you up in it, and see how like you will be to some of the ladies in the portrait gallery!"

So after a time Marian yields to the coaxing of the young girl, for whom she has conceived such an affection, and allows her to slip the loose morning robe over her tight-fitting cashmere dress, to clasp the massive turquoise collar round her throat, the bracelets on her arms, and even to pile up her fair locks, in the fashion of yesteryears, put a patch on her lip, another by her brow, down the high-heeled satin slippers embroidered to match, takes the fan in her hand, and walks slowly across the polished oak boards, her hands tapping and affecting an air of grace and surveying herself in a great old-fashioned looking glass that is set into the wall and which is somewhat dim from age and damp.

The glass mirrors back the figure before it faithfully, it dimly and indistinctly, and the Countess starts at her own reflection. "Where has she seen it before?"

"It suits you perfectly!" cries little Ada, regarding her with admiring eyes. "You ought to have your portrait painted in it."

"Yes," assents Lady Marian, dreamily, still regarding her image and teasing her memory.

"Come into the next room. We will see what is there," and she follows the girl slowly, her rich robe trailing after her.

"There is not much here."

"Only some old pictures. I wonder why this one has its face to the wall. I must see what it is; please come and help me to turn it."

"Little curiosity!" laughs Marian, as she puts out one hand and helps to turn the framed picture.

An exclamation, half horror, half amazement, breaks from her lips as her eyes fall on it, for it is the full-length, life-size portrait of the woman whose miniature her husband tore down from the walls of the portrait gallery the day she came to the Castle, and, what is more, she sees that she has donned the costume in which wicked Madame Dorothy has been painted.

There they are—the trailing, flower-embroidered robe, the high-heeled shoes, the costly jewels, the gaudy fan, and surmounting them the lovely, matronly face, with its brown eyes, delicate features, and wealth of fair, lightly-powdered hair.

"Why, you are dressed like the picture. It must have been her image. Why isn't she with the others in the gallery?"

"She was a bad woman!" replies Marian, in a low tone, scarcely able to take her eyes from the face, which is fresh, blooming, life-like, and she looks, which seem to mock and threaten her with their insolent expression of triumph and wickedness. "Help me to take off these clothes," and wrenching round her head she moves towards the door, but a mocking laugh catches her, and she sees Lady Silver standing there, her riding habit gathered up in one hand, a heavy whip in the other.

(To be concluded in our next.)

FACTS.

STOCK OF GOOD SHEPHERD.—Getting the prize at a dog show.

"Mike, let's yourself that can tell me how they make ice creams?" "In truth I can; don't they bake them in cold ovens, to be sure."

There are numerous new styles of parasols displayed this summer, but all will be worn just high enough to take out the eyes of reckless pedestrians.

A BACHELOR asserts that a married man never has a cold dinner, for, when he happens to go home late his wife always makes it hot for him.

A MAN gave a cattle farm to his six sons. Why is that farm like the focus of a lens? The sun's rays meet there (the sons raise meat there).

"I'm surprised, John!" said an old lady, when she found the butler helping himself to some of her finest old port. "So am I, ma'am," was the calm reply; "I thought you were gone out."

"What you ever caught in a sudden squall?" asked an old yachtsman of a worthy citizen. "Well, I should think so," responded the good man; "I have helped to bring up eight babies!"

One man complained to Foote that another man had ruined his character. "So much the better," replied the wit. "It was a bad one, and the sooner it was destroyed the more to your advantage."

FATHER, addressing his little boy, who has brought home a bad mark from school: "Now, Johnny, what shall I do with this stick?"—Johnny: "Why, go for a walk, papa."

"What do you think of my moustache?" asked a young man of his girl. "Oh, it reminds me of a city in a new colony," was the answer. "In what respect, pray?" "Because the survey is large enough, but the settlers are struggling."

A master was interrogating a class of boys on the subject of cloth the other day. "What is this, George?" said the principal, teaching a bright-eyed pupil's upper garment. "A jacket, sir." "What was it made from, my boy?" "The pupil, after a few minutes' reflection: "My father's coat, sir."

STUMP ORATOR: "I don't think I take with the masses." ADMIRER: "Nonsense! You are earning golden opinions." STUMP ORATOR: "Yes, it looks like it, when I speak right after night, and never receive the least applause." ADMIRER: "That's what I said. Silence is golden, you know."

A GERMAN of unspeakable height and comeliness was one day walking through the streets of Berlin, when a poor woman accosted him, and begged for alms. He refused her. "Well," she said, "I beg you at least to give me one of your left-off shoes."—"What would you do with it?"—"Why, make it into a cradle for my child!"

It was after the concert, and a well-known German cantatrice asked a gentleman to whom she had been introduced how he liked her duet. "You sang charmingly, madam. But why did you select such a horrid piece of music?" "Sir, that was written by my late husband!" "Ah, yes, of course! I did not mean— But why did you select such a fellow to sing with?" "Ah, that is my present husband!"

"No," said Fogg, meditatively, "I don't fear what may come to me in another world; it is the sort of dying that fills me with a sort of nameless dread. I don't like the idea of crossing dark rivers. I always was afraid of the water, you know." "You shouldn't let that worry you," replied Mrs. F.; "you'll have a splendid chance of drying your clothes when you catch the other side."

SOMETHING LACKING.—Baker: "Yes, mum, I now put my name on my bread to prevent my rivals from imitating my loaves and getting my custom." Housekeeper: "A wise precaution. But was that bread you left here yesterday genuine?" "Oh, yes, mum." "Then I would suggest that you add something besides your name to the loaves." "Certainly, mum, if you say so. What is it?" "The date."

JAMES had been to the house of a neighbour to play with the children. "Well, Johnny," asked his mother on his return, "did you enjoy yourself?" "Oh, yes, ma; and they are going to have fricasee for dinner." "Haven't I told you times out of number that you must never repeat what you have heard in people's houses?" "But, ma, I didn't hear anything about the stew—I smelled it with my nose."

"If I were to offer to marry you," said a particularly disagreeable young man to a pretty young lady, "in what case would I find you?"—"In the objective," she sweetly replied.

When the eccentric Christophers of Sweden came to Paris, and the great ladies of the Court were rushing to kiss her on her arrival, she exclaimed: "Why, they seem to take me for a gentleman!"

"What do you ask for that?" inquired an old man of a pretty girl in a fancy warehouse. "Five shillings," she answered. "Aren't you a little dear?" he said. "Well," she replied, blushing, "all the young men will do so."

SOME—Village school. Lady visitor (to a very dirty child):—"Jane, why don't you come with a clean face to school?" Jane (after some hesitation):—"Please, ma'am, neither can I wash my face with water, and she won't let me use soap, for it cracks me skin."

The lady's eldest son was rather a simpleton. His father one day told a tenant:—"I am going to send the young lord abroad." "What for?" said the tenant. "To see the world," to be sure. "But, lordship, hard, when the world see him?"

"Yes," she said to her escort, as they glided round the rink, "I do love roller-skating. When we are sailing round this way my soul seems to be floating toward heaven, and— By some mistake in the programme at this point both of her soles floated away towards heaven, while the rest of her smote the earthly floor with a mighty smite."

WHEELER PHILIPS was waiting for the train at Essex Junction, Vermont, where passengers exercised at times great patience. He saw a graveyard away from the village, near the station, and very full. He inquired the reason, and a Green Mountaineer solemnly informed him that it was used to bury passengers in who died waiting for the train.

Two good-natured sons of Erin occupied the same bedroom one stormy night, and in the morning one of them inquired:—"Dennis, did you hear the thunder last night?" "No, Pat; did it thunder?" "Yes, it thundered as if heaven and earth would come together." "Why, then, didn't you wake me? You know I can't sleep when it thunders."

An old man would not believe he could hear his wife talk five miles by telephone. His sister-in-law was in a country some several miles away where there was a telephone, and the sceptic was also in a place where there was a similar instrument, and, on being told how telephonic he walked boldly up and shouted: "Hello, Jane!" At that instant lightning struck the telephone wire and knocked the man down, and as he crawled to his feet he excitedly cried, "That's Jane, every time!"

The idea of putting John on a jury! exclaimed Mrs. Tompkins, when she heard that her husband had been summoned. "They might as well order a new trial right off. They won't get John to agree on a verdict. He is the most obstinate man I ever saw. I never knew him to agree with his own wife in anything, and it isn't at all likely he's going to agree with people he doesn't know anything about. A pretty juryman he is!"

A country merchant caught a thief going through his cash-box. "Hallo, there, he sung out, 'what do you want in that box?' "Oh, nothing," said the man, sheepishly, backing off and trying to get away. "Well, don't let me disturb you. You'll find exactly what you say you want. I've found the same thing there for the past six weeks."

CONVINCED SOCIETY MEN.—He: "Has you ever attended one of dese high-toned white folks' so-called, Miss Matilda?"—She: "No, sah; I nebbor associates wid dat kind of folks." He: "Well, Miss Matilda, it would make you laugh fit to kill yerself to see dese and styles dey put on, and how dey immortalize de called ladies and gentlemen."

SOCIETY.

The late Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbützel, or, to give his full name, Augustus Louis William Maximilian Frederic, had no expensive tastes. He loved music, but, unlike the eccentric monarch of Bavaria, he built and endowed no theatres. Thus the income derived from his mines in the Duchy of Oels mounted up year by year, gathered and increased, until, dying at seventy-eight, he has left a fortune valued at fifteen millions of pounds sterling. Who will succeed him? Whether the Duke of Cumberland may eat the leek, whether the Duke of Cambridge may unexpectedly be called upon, or, still more likely still, whether the land-hunger of Prussia will swallow the Duchy, must shortly be known; as also whether Kaiser Franz Josef, already wealthy, or the Duke of Cumberland will inherit this majestic piece of fifteen "plains."

The Prince and Princess of Wales and Princess Christian and a distinguished company met at St. Paul's Church, Knightsbridge, to witness the marriage of the Marquis of Stafford, eldest son of the Duke of Sutherland, with the Lady Millicent St. Clair Erskine, eldest daughter of the Earl of Rosslyn. The marriage took place by special licence at one o'clock, by which hour the whole of the wedding party had arrived.

The body of the church was reserved for the royal guests and numerous relatives and friends of the contracting couple, and the galleries were filled with those privileged with tickets of admission. The Marquis of Stafford was attended by the Earl of Fife as best man. The bride, who entered the church at one o'clock with her father, was received by her nine bridesmaids, and the choristers met the bridal procession and preceded it to the chancel, singing a nuptial hymn.

The bride wore a very beautiful dress composed of the richest pearl white satin, the long plain train being puffed at the top, and bordered on each side with pearl and silver trimming. The satin front was embroidered all over with pearly, slightly intermixed with silver, and opened up each side, showing on one side a large bow of Brussels lace, the other being caught with bunches of orange-flowers.

The daughters of Erin are taking a step in the right direction. At the Royal University Commencements nine of them were made Bachelors of Arts, having passed successfully all the necessary examinations. The fair graduates are all young, and most of them are possessed of attractions which were set off rather than concealed by the prominence of their newly-acquired caps, gowns, and hoods. On one happy maiden was conferred a musical degree, and her composition was performed on the great organ for the benefit of the select crowd who filled the large hall of the building. It is so unusual for women in Ireland to occupy an important position when the field is open to men as well that funny rumours were in circulation on the subject of the style of dress to be worn, and the mode of proceeding to be adopted.

Some of the ladies concerned heard that the Duke of Abercorn was likely to bestow a "drawing-room" kiss; a few believed that the divided skirt was *de rigueur*; others that black velvet was the regulation garb; and more trembled under the report that a row of nine chairs was to deck the platform, and on these, within full range of the opera-glasses of the spectators, the nine nudes were to sit, as stiff and as uncomfortable as a set of mine-pins. However, it turned out when the awful day came that not one of the University authorities was inclined to make half such a fuss over them as they expected. The ceremony, of course, was more interesting than if they had not graced it with their presence, and their fellow-students expressed, without the slightest sign of jealousy, their approval of the new departure on the part of their clever sisters.

STATISTICS.

There were 2,658,978 accounts remaining open at the Post-office savings bank on Dec. 31, 1883; representing £41,768,808 8s. 9d.

THE GERMAN PRESS.—From recent statistics we learn that the number of newspapers in the German language published in Prussia is 1,635, with about 5,000,000 subscribers; in Baden, Bavaria, and Württemberg 652 in all, with 1½ million subscribers; in the smaller German States 360, with about 680,000 subscribers; in Alsace-Lorraine 52, with 120,770 subscribers; giving a total of German newspapers in the whole empire of 25,799. In Austria-Hungary, again, there appear 518 political journals, of which 297 are in German and 221 in other languages. In 1882 the following classes of books were published in Germany and German-speaking countries:—Encyclopædias, dictionaries, bibliographies, &c., 311; theology, 1,807; law, 1,670; medicine, 839; natural science, 799; philosophy, 155; school-books, 1,651; books for children, 401; in classical and Eastern languages, 577; in modern languages, 439; in Slav and Hungarian languages, 48; history, biography, memoirs, 303; geography, 364; mathematics and astronomy, 199; military art, veterinary art, 344; commerce, 679; architecture, engineering, &c., 372; forests, chase, mines, &c., 416; fiction, poetry, drama, &c., 1,291; fine arts, music stenography, &c., 558; novels, 599; freemasonry, 281; miscellaneous, 404; maps, 346. Total, 13,905. In 1862 the total was only 9,770.

GEMS.

We have a thousand reasons wherewith to condemn our neighbour, but not one wherewith to excuse him.

Do all you can to stand, and then fear lest you may fall, and by the grace of Heaven you are safe.

When a man's coat is getting a little old, it may be turned. The older his brain is, the less excuse there is for its being turned.

PREFERENCES go a great way with men that take fair words and magisterial looks for current payment.

CONSUME and criticisms never hurt anybody. If false they cannot harm you, unless you are wanting in character; and if true, they show a man his weak points, and forewarn him against failure and trouble.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO DRESSER-BIRD BAST.—Grease a plate with lard, and set it where safe to congregate; place a few bits of wood so that the ants can climb on the plate easily; they will forsake any food for lard; when the plate is well covered with them, turn it over a hot fire of coals; they will drop into the fire, and you can then reset the plate for another catch. A few repetitions will clean them out.

TO LOOSEN THE GLASS STOPPLES OF SMELLING BOTTLES AND DECANTERS.—With a feather rub a drop or two of olive oil round the stopple, close to the mouth of the bottle or decanter, which must be then placed before the fire, at the distance of a foot or eighteen inches, in which position the heat will cause the oil to spread downwards between the stopple and the neck. When the bottle or decanter has grown warm, gently strike the stopple on one side and on the other with a light wooden instrument; then try it with the hand. If it will not yet move, place it again before the fire, adding, if you choose, another drop of oil. After awhile strike again as before; and by persevering in this process, however tightly the stopple may be fastened in, you will at length succeed in loosening it.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A FATHER has no right to do business or worry himself out of health in order to keep young men and women in idleness. It is better for both father and children that they go out at once to earn their bread, and get that training which the world never spares to those who will not take it from a father.

PULLMAN sleeping cars, now so familiar to us, have yet only just completed their first quarter of a century. The pioneer sleeping car ran one August night from Bloomington, Illinois, U.S., to Chicago, and contained but four passengers, who paid 2s. apiece.

Socks and stockings are no longer to be worn in England, but the feet are only to be clad in warm boots. So, at least, the *Paris-Presse* declares, informing us that the "fathers of families" have deeply studied this question, and are convinced that stockings are not only useless, but perfectly injurious from a hygienic point of view.

HISTORY IN THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW.—The historical section of the procession on Lord Mayor's Day (November 10), when Mr. Alderman Neave will be escorted from the Guildhall to the Law Courts, will be of an interesting character. The representation will include two Norman knights, with banner, followed by William the Conqueror on horseback in armour. Then will come two knights with a banner bearing the inscription, "The Charter, A.D. 1067." The City's Charter is in these words:—"William the king friendly salutes William the Bishop and Godfrey the Poptreave and all the burgesses within London, both French and English, and I declare that I grant you to be all law-worthy, as you were in the days of King Edward; and I grant that every child shall be his father's heir, after his father's days, and I will not suffer any person to do you wrong. God keep you." A car with four horses will follow, and then the original charter in a gold box on a raised dais, guarded by "maniacs" with drawn swords, will succeed. Next come two knights with a banner bearing the inscription, "Richard Cœur de Lion, in whose reign the first Mayor of London was created." Richard I., attended by several mounted knights dressed as crusaders, will follow. Then will appear four knights, with the banner inscribed "Henricus Fitz-Alwyne, first Mayor, A.D. 1189," and others with the banners "Edward III. held tournament in Chesapeake, 1329," and "Richard II. (Wat Tyler Rebellion)." Next will come a car on which will be deposited a tablet, "Lord Mayor Walworth standing over the body of Wat Tyler, whom he has just slain, in defending the King;" and after that a car drawn by twelve ponies, with a lad representing Dick Whittington at Highgate, retreating to Bow bells, with banners inscribed, "Turn again, Whittington, thrice Lord Mayor of London," and "Sir Richard Whittington, thrice Lord Mayor of London, 1398, 1406, and 1419." Next will come two knights bearing a banner, with the inscription, "Edward VI., founder of Christ's Hospital, 1553," followed by twenty-four Blue-coat boys, with the banner "All praise to our founder, King Edward VI." Then will come Sir Walter Raleigh and knights bearing the banner, "Queen Elizabeth on charger as at Tilbury Fort, 1588," and more knights carrying the banner, "The citizens of London sent forty ships and 10,000 men to repel the Spanish Armada." An equestrienne representing Queen Elizabeth will succeed these banners. Afterwards representations connected with Egypt and India will form part of the show, such as sailors with a Nile boat, a herd of camels, with Soudanese attendants and ridden by men in costume representing our army in Egypt, and several elephants, with rajahs in howdahs. The armour and costumes will be copied from ancient engravings in the possession of the City of London.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. E.—We have never heard of anything of the kind.
E. W. G.—The translation of the sentence is that "Opportunity makes the thief."

A. B. W.—All you have to do is to write the young lady a respectful letter, telling her that you would like to have the privilege of a correspondence with her.

E. W.—Fuller's earth is a kind of clay that attracts and absorbs grease, and is sometimes used to take grease spots out of pine wood tables and floors.

P. L. M.—Obey your parents. Do not think of eloping. Your brain does not recommend himself to us by such a proposition. The hair enclosed is black.

E. G. G.—Many persons object to kissing those who are comparative strangers. The young lady showed her good will by offering her cheek.

C. C.—Such a marriage would be illegal, and the man could be prosecuted for bigamy. If you wish to prosecute your husband you had better employ a good lawyer.

W. E. G.—If you desire to win this young lady you had better propose immediately. She is probably in doubt as to your intentions. Settle the matter at once by offering her your hand in marriage.

T. D. D.—You had better take no such chances. Such marriages with old men seldom prove comfortable or profitable. You might not get the money after all. Take counsel with your modesty. Do not marry until you can give your heart with your hand.

D. L.—We do not think that your beau has acted in an honourable manner, and we advise you to let him go. Invite other company, and divert your mind from him. We do not think that he intends to marry you, and it is foolish to dwell upon such an uncertain chance.

P. C.—It is perfectly proper to invite an agreeable acquaintance to call upon you at your residence. It is the privilege of a lady first to recognise an acquaintance, and a gentleman should always wait until he is recognised before bowing. It is not usual for young ladies to kiss a gentleman until engaged.

W. S. S.—You have acted altogether properly. If the young man desires your love he will seek it. Do not make any special overtures for his society. Let him show a little enterprise. Treat him politely and invite him to call upon you, but nothing more. Invite other company. A rival sometimes serves as a spur to a backward swain. You write very nicely.

A. R. C.—It is usual to propose to the young lady first, and if the proposal is favourably received, she refers the gentleman to her parents for their sanction. A young man's intentions are usually made known to parents by his frequent visits and by preliminary conversations, so that his proposal is expected before it is made. Young ladies tell their mothers of such affairs.

FRED A.—Do not be in any haste to win a lady's love and to engage yourself to marry. You are very young and inexperienced, as your letter plainly shows. Wait a couple of years before thinking much of marriage. In the meantime visit the young lady as a friend. No young lady ever betrays her love until she is sought in marriage. It is the part of the gentleman to invite a young lady to go out with him. When you propose you will find out if you are beloved.

LOTTIE.—Owing to the respect which our women deserve and receive, unmarried ladies are allowed more freedom and perhaps look about more boldly than in other countries, although, of course, most young ladies use their freedom in this respect sparingly. It is usual in this country to await recognition from ladies, so that you owe no apology; but if you should meet the young lady in society it would be proper to allude to the matter. Your letter is very well written for one who has studied English for only two years.

R. F. W.—1. Of the three great generals you name Caesar was the only one who was successful to the end, or whose conquests proved permanent. On this account he is considered the greatest general. He was still more pre-eminently the greatest man of the three. 2. The Lord's Prayer in the original is in Greek, not Hebrew. 3. Lindley Murray's Grammar is a painstaking work, which any one may still study with advantage. 4. The translation of your sentence is as follows:—"The very wise Socrates was accustomed to say that he himself knew nothing, except this very thing, that he knew nothing; that the rest did not know even this."

MAYBUD.—If they are living in the same house you should ask for both the bride and her mother, and if both should be out you should leave a card for each. In regard to calling on the reception days, you must be governed by local customs. If the item in your paper was inserted for the purpose of notifying the friends of the young people, and in place of invitations, you should call on one of the reception days, but if there is the slightest doubt in your mind on this point call on some other day. Something will then probably be said about the receptions, and if you find you are expected to attend them, you can pay your friends the compliment of another call. You are, of course, one of the bride's "friends" in the conventional sense of the word. A daughter would be guilty of an insult to her mother if she refused the acquaintance of anyone whom her mother had invited to her wedding. You should congratulate the young couple the first time you see them after their marriage, whether the time since their marriage has been long or short.

W. A.—Do not make any special effort to win back the young man. If he believes idle tales without giving you a chance to refute them, he is too credulous, and scarcely worthy of much regard.

C. A. G.—There can be little doubt but that the young man has been trifling with your friend. She should show a little more independent spirit, and not let him have quite so much his own way.

G. G.—Sir Walter Scott, in quoting the proverb in one of his romances, says it is from the Spanish. He gives it in its full form as: "Save me from the indiscretion of my friends, and I will defend myself against the hostility of my enemies."

W. R.—There are various kinds of engineers, and your mode of proceeding would depend on what line of engineering you wish to pursue. A good way would be for you to call on some engineer, tell him what you want, and ask him for practical advice on the subject.

L. L. M.—Do not be discouraged because of one refusal. If the lady has no other bean your chance of winning her is better than before you proposed. Go right on with your courting. You are rather young yet to marry anyway. Be agreeable and enterprising.

E. V. R.—No doubt there are thousands who believe in astrology, fortune-telling, and kindred matters. The world has never been destitute of dupes of all kinds; but it is useless for you to attempt to impose your pretentious nonsense upon intelligent people.

R. N. W.—It is not at all probable that it would be possible for you to obtain a loan on the terms you propose, except from some personal friend who would not consider the repayment of the money of any great consequence in comparison with his desire to help you.

A. L. L.—You are probably deceived with regard to the estate of which you imagine yourself to be an heir. Steamships have come into vogue so recently that all the owners of large lines of them are known and could easily be traced. It is not yet half a century since the first line of them was established.

FANNY BLOSSOM.

Two young blossoms, fastened
Together, emblems fair!
Plucked by her gentle fingers,
Worn in her soft brown hair!
So like our hearts united,
To make a perfect whole.
The same vows doubly plighted—
Two beings, yet one soul.

Softly I kissed them. Wildly
My heart with gladness beat,
To know she waited eager
Till we again should meet;
To know she trusted fully;
To feel the placed in me
That faith, so free from shadow,
From doubt, from jealousy.

Think of you? Darling, never
A day nor hour has passed
Without the longest yearnings,
Since last your form I clasped.
Soon I again shall see you,
And fold you to my heart!
Oh! never, never after,
To live our lives apart.

H. B. S.

E. E. K.—Do not marry either until you are free from doubt as to the one whom you love. It is not possible for a lady to be in love with two persons at the same time. You are too young to marry, and a little time will solve all your perplexities.

A. A. N.—You had better get rid of your jealous beau. Give him to understand that you do not find his company acceptable. When he calls send word to him that you are engaged, and do not see him. It is better to be relieved altogether of a troublesome beau, if it is impossible to make him an agreeable friend. There is a good motto which reads, "Be off with the old love before you are on with the new."

L. V. G.—Your experience is common to many very young ladies. Your passion for this young man would probably disappear on better acquaintance with him. It is merely a passing fancy, and you are in love with an ideal and not a real person, since you have only a bowing acquaintance with the real person. You will outgrow it in a few months, particularly if you should meet one who should be more attractive.

C. W. J.—No one author is sufficiently well informed to write a really good book on so vast a subject as America, as a whole. A good school history and geography, a census report, and an encyclopedia published in America, are the best materials for the study of the country, and by using your eyes and ears you can learn a good deal of great practical value which you will not find in any book.

R. A. Y.—There are seventy-six United States Senators—two from each State. The terms of twenty-five expire in 1885, twenty-five in 1887, and twenty-six in 1889. You will find their names in any political almanac. Of the entire number thirty-eight are Republicans, thirty-six Democrats, and two Readjusters or Coalitionists. 2. The terms of the Governors of the several States vary from one to four years. 3. We know of no authority upon the subject. 4. Your handwriting possesses the great merit of legibility, and is very creditable to you.

C. W. G.—There is no such remedy as you mention.

C. R. G.—There is no such society.

W. M. C.—The will does not require a stamp, but must be properly attested.

G. C.—Carry out the plan, and you will probably succeed; but keep your own counsel.

D. M. C.—1. It would last fourteen years. 2. Apply at the Great Seal Patent Office, 35, Southampton-building, London, W.C.

TAUPE CHARITY.—The wife can obtain a divorce on the ground of his desertion and his second marriage. She ought to ascertain whether the husband is really alive before she marries again.

A. R. R.—We do not approve of sentimental correspondence until the parties are engaged. You had better wait until you see or hear from this gentleman. He may have met with another young lady, who may have driven all thoughts of you out of his mind.

C. C. M.—If you wish to be friendly you may bow to him when next you meet him. This should be sufficient encouragement for him. If you receive him back into favour it should be only on receiving an offer of marriage. It is time that he proposed.

COLLIE G.—Your best course would be to go to Philadelphia and ascertain the exact facts of the case, which you could doubtless easily do. The firm that employs your niece's lover could probably tell you all that it would be necessary for you to find out.

A. F. M.—The words mean: "No one wounds me with impunity." The motto is usually placed beneath or round a representation of the thistle, the emblem of Scotland, and applies equally to the prickly flower and to the country it symbolises.

LISBIE.—You had better confide fully in your mother. Her advice will help you more than any that we can offer. You are a young and inexperienced girl, and may wreck your life by a false step. This young man needs your father's attention. Do not accept or marry any one without your parents' consent.

P. P. P.—On returning it would be proper for all the party to enter the parlour together. The young lady visitor may excuse herself and go to her room, if she likes. Your writing, composition, and spelling are very good.

A. M. M.—Do not allow the admiration of these young gentlemen to annoy. They are perfectly harmless. All pretty girls are apt to be somewhat stared at, and should learn not to notice the rudeness. You had better wait until your school days are past before entertaining gentlemen with a view to marriage.

IRENE.—1. The best cure is simple living and plenty of exercise. We cannot recommend any patent medicine. 2. The hair, complexion, and eyes match very well. 3. A young lady ought not to think about such matters till she is turned eighteen.

P. F. R.—To make Coffee Cream, dissolve two ounces of isinglass in just enough water to cover it; put to half a pint of cream one teaspoonful and a-half of very strong clear coffee, with powdered sugar; let it just boil, leave it standing till nearly cold, then pour it into a mold, and, when quite set, turn it out.

P. F. W.—As long as you can possibly endure to do so we advise you to remain with your husband. He can probably keep the children if you leave him. This might be a legal question to be decided in court. Do nothing without the advice of good friends and your nearest relatives. Your father and mother are your best advisers.

R. W. B.—It is decidedly not to your interest to leave your good and comfortable home and to go upon the lyric stage. We speak from a large acquaintance with those who have experienced the trials and vicissitudes of the life of the stage. Scarcely a tenth of those who have trod the boards have met with even a moderate success, and failure means misery.

S. C. T.—Your penmanship is fair. There would be no harm, and there might be an advantage in your continuing to cultivate your taste for writing. If you should send some of your productions gratuitously to the local papers, so as to have them published, your name might become favourably known to some extent, and the popularity of your articles could be tested.

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London: Published for the Proprietor, at 434, Strand, by J. B. SPECK; and Printed by WOODFALL and KENDER, Milford Lane, Strand.

